Three Hundred English Sonnets

David M. Main

Bog

Dr. De Mag
1889.

THREE HUNDRED
ENGLISH SONNETS

OF THIS GARDEN OF THE MUSES

THOU which delight'st to view this goodly plot,
  Here take such flowres as best shal serve thy use,
Where thou maist find in every curious knot,
  Of speciall vertue, and most precious juyce,
Set by Apollo in their severall places,
  And nourishèd with his celestiall Beames,
And watered by the Muses and the Graces,
  With the fresh dew of those Castalian streames.
What sente or colour canst thou but devise
  That is not here, that may delight the sense?
Or what can Art or Industry comprize,
  That in aboundance is not gather'd hence?
No Garden yet was ever halfe so sweet
As where Apollo and the Muses meet.

Belvedére; or, The Garden of the Muses, 1600.

THREE HUNDRED
ENGLISH SONNETS

CHOSEN AND EDITED

WITH A FEW NOTES

BY

DAVID M. MAIN

EDITOR OF 'A TREASURY OF ENGLISH SONNETS'

NEW EDITION

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'Upon a day Apollo met the Muses and the Graces 'in sweet sport mixed with earnest. Memory, the 'grave and noble mother of the Muses, was present 'likewise. Each of the fourteen spoke a line of 'verse. Apollo began; then each of the nine Muses 'sang her part; then the three Graces warbled each 'in turn; and finally, a low, sweet strain from Mem-'ory made a harmonious close. This was the first 'Sonnet; and, mindful of its origin, all true poets 'take care to bid Apollo strike the keynote for them 'when they compose one, and to let Memory compress 'the pith and marrow of the sonnet into its last 'line.'—*A Talk about Sonnets.*

PREFACE

THROUGHOUT this little book, as in the Text of my larger work, *A Treasury of English Sonnets*, from which its matter is almost wholly drawn, modern spelling has been adopted, as best suited to a volume intended for popular use; the only exceptions being confined to a few archaic forms, in the earlier pages, still not entirely obsolete.

It may also be mentioned that I have deferentially retained one or two orthographic anomalies in the case of Milton, and in that of Wordsworth, his own peculiar system of capitals.

As regards the sources of the poems, it has been thought necessary to state them only where not ascertainable from the Notes to my former work.

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D. M. M.

DOUNE, PERTHSHIRE,
March 1884

'Still climbing trees in the Hesperides.'
Love's Labour's Lost.

A RENOUNCING OF LOVE.

FAREWELL, Love, and all thy laws for ever!
Thy baited hooks shall tangle me no more:
Senec and Plato call me from thy lore
To perfect wealth my wit for to endeavour.
In blind errour when that I did perséver,
Thy sharp repulse, that pricketh aye so sore,
Taught me in trifles that I set no store;
But 'scaped forththence, since, liberty is liever.
Therefore, farewell! go trouble younger hearts,
And in me claim no more authority:
With idle youth go use thy property,
And thereon spend thy many brittle darts;
For hitherto though I have lost my time,
Me list no longer rotten boughs to climb.

A CONSOLATION.

DIVERS doth use, as I have heard and know,
When that to change their ladies do begin,
To mourn, and wail, and never for to lynn,
Hoping thereby to 'pease their painful woe.
And some there be that when it chanceth so
That women change, and hate where love hath bin,
They call them false, and think with words to win
The hearts of them which otherwhere doth grow.
But as for me, though that by chance indeed
Change hath outworn the favour that I had,
I will not wail, lament, nor yet be sad,
Nor call her false that falsely did me feed;
But let it pass, and think it is of kind
That often change doth please a woman's mind

SPRING.

THE soote season, that bud and bloom furth brings,
With green hath clad the hill and eke the vale,
The nightingale with feathers new she sings;
The turtle to her make hath told her tale.
Summer is come, for every spray now springs,
The hart hath hung his old head on the pale;
The buck in brake his winter coat he flings;
The fishes flete with new-repairèd scale;
The adder all her slough away she slings;
The swift swallow pursueth the flies smale;
The busy bee her honey now she mings;
Winter is worn that was the flowers' bale.
And thus I see among these pleasant things
Each care decays, and yet my sorrow springs.

A VOW TO LOVE FAITHFULLY.

SET me whereas the sun doth parch the green,
Or where his beams do not dissolve the ice;
In temperate heat, where he is felt and seen;
In presence prest of people mad or wise;
Set me in high, or yet in low degree;
In longest night, or in the shortest day;
In clearest sky, or where clouds thickest be;
In lusty youth, or when my hairs are gray:
Set me in heaven, in earth, or else in hell,
In hill, or dale, or in the foaming flood;
Thrall, or at large, alive whereso I dwell,
Sick, or in health, in evil fame, or good,
Hers will I be; and only with this thought
Content myself, although my chance be nought.

SARDANAPALUS.

THE Assyrian king, in peace, with foul desire
And filthy lusts that stained his regal heart;
In war, that should set princely hearts on fire,
Did yield, vanquished for want of martial art.
The dint of swords from kisses seemèd strange,
And harder than his lady's side his targe;
From glutton feasts to soldier's fare a change;
His helmet far above a garland's charge:
Who scarce the name of manhood did retain,
Drenchèd in sloth and womanish delight,
Feeble of spright, impatient of pain,
When he had lost his honour and his right,
(Proud time of wealth, in storms appalled with dread,)
Murthered himself, to show some manful deed.

RUDELY thou wrongest my dear heart's desire,
In finding fault with her too portly pride:
The thing which I do most in her admire,
Is of the world unworthy most envied;
For in those lofty looks is close implied
Scorn of base things, and 'sdeign of foul dishonour,
Threatening rash eyes which gaze on her so wide,
That loosely they ne dare to look upon her.
Such pride is praise, such portliness is honour,
That boldened innocence bears in her eyes;
And her fair countenance, like a goodly banner,
Spreads in defiance of all enemies.
Was never in this world ought worthy tried,
Without some spark of such self-pleasing pride.

LIKE as a ship that through the ocean wide,
By conduct of some star, doth make her way,
Whenas a storm hath dimmed her trusty guide,
Out of her course doth wander far astray,—
So I, whose star, that wont with her bright ray
Me to direct, with clouds is overcast,
Do wander now, in darkness and dismay,
Through hidden perils round about me placed;
Yet hope I well that, when this storm is past,
My Helice, the lodestar of my life,
Will shine again, and look on me at last,
With lovely light to clear my cloudy grief.
Till then I wander careful, comfortless,
In secret sorrow and sad pensiveness.

THE glorious image of the Maker's beauty,
My sovereign saint, the idol of my thought,
Dare not henceforth above the bounds of duty
T' accuse of pride or rashly blame for ought.
For being as she is divinely wrought,
And of the brood of angels heavenly born,
And with the crew of blessèd saints upbrought,
Each of which did her with their gifts adorn;
The bud of joy, the blossom of the morn,
The beam of light whom mortal eyes admire;
What reason is it then but she should scorn
Base things, that to her love too bold aspire!
Such heavenly forms ought rather worshipped be,
Than dare be loved by men of mean degree.

THIS holy season, fit to fast and pray,
Men to devotion ought to be inclined:
Therefore I likewise on so holy day
For my sweet saint some service fit will find.
Her temple fair is built within my mind,
In which her glorious image placèd is,
On which my thoughts do day and night attend,
Like sacred priests that never think amiss!
There I to her, as the author of my bliss,
Will build an altar to appease her ire,
And on the same my heart will sacrifice,
Burning in flames of pure and chaste desire:
The which vouchsafe, O goddess, to accept,
Amongst thy dearest relics to be kept.

THE doubt which ye misdeem, fair Love, is vain,
That fondly fear to lose your liberty;
When, losing one, two liberties ye gain,
And make him bond that bondage erst did fly.
Sweet be the bands the which true love doth tie,
Without constraint or dread of any ill:
The gentle bird feels no captivity
Within her cage, but sings, and feeds her fill;—
There pride dare not approach, nor discord spill
The league 'twixt them that loyal love hath bound,
But simple truth and mutual good-will
Seeks with sweet peace to salve each other's wound;
There Faith doth fearless dwell in brazen tower,
And spotless Pleasure builds her sacred bower.

ONE day I wrote her name upon the strand;
But came the waves and washèd it away:
Again I wrote it with a second hand,
But came the tide and made my pains his prey.
Vain man! said she, that dost in vain assay
A mortal thing so to immortalize;
For I myself shall like to this decay,
And eke my name be wipèd out likewise.
Not so, quoth I; let baser things devise
To die in dust, but you shall live by fame:
My verse your virtues rare shall eternize,
And in the heavens write your glorious name,—
Where, whenas death shall all the world subdue,
Our love shall live, and later life renew.

MEN call you fair, and you do credit it,
For that yourself ye daily such do see:
But the true fair, that is the gentle wit
And virtuous mind, is much more praised of me.
For all the rest, however fair it be,
Shall turn to nought and lose that glorious hue;
But only that is permanent and free
From frail corruption, that doth flesh ensue.
That is true beauty: that doth argue you
To be divine, and born of heavenly seed;
Derived from that fair Spirit from whom all true
And perfect beauty did at first proceed.
He only fair, and what He fair hath made;
All other fair, like flowers, untimely fade.

MOST glorious Lord of life! that on this day
Didst make thy triumph over death and sin,
And having harrowed hell didst bring away
Captivity thence captive, us to win:
This joyous day, dear Lord, with joy begin;
And grant that we, for whom Thou diddest die,
Being with thy dear blood clean washed from sin,
May live for ever in felicity.
And that thy love we weighing worthily,
May likewise love Thee for the same again;
And for thy sake, that all like dear didst buy,
With love may one another entertain.
So let us love, dear Love, like as we ought:
Love is the lesson which the Lord us taught.

A VISION UPON THE FAERY QUEEN.

METHOUGHT I saw the grave where Laura lay,
Within that temple where the vestal flame
Was wont to burn; and passing by that way
To see that buried dust of living fame,
Whose tomb fair Love and fairer Virtue kept,
All suddenly I saw the Faery Queen:
At whose approach the soul of Petrarch wept;
And from thenceforth those Graces were not seen,
For they this Queen attended; in whose stead
Oblivion laid him down on Laura's hearse.
Hereat the hardest stones were seen to bleed,
And groans of buried ghosts the heavens did pierce,
Where Homer's spright did tremble all for grief,
And cursed the access of that celestial thief.

CONCERNING THE HONOUR OF BOOKS.

SINCE honour from the honourer proceeds,
How well do they deserve, that memorize
And leave in Books for all posterities
The names of worthies and their virtuous deeds;
When all their glory else, like water-weeds
Without their element, presently dies,
And all their greatness quite forgotten lies,
And when and how they flourished no man heeds!
How poor remembrances are statues, tombs,
And other monuments that men erect
To princes, which remain in closèd rooms
Where but a few behold them, in respect
Of Books, that to the universal eye
Show how they lived; the other where they lie!

PHAETON TO HIS FRIEND FLORIO.

PREFIXED TO FLORIO'S 'SECOND FRUTES,' 1591

SWEET friend, whose name agrees with thy increase,
How fit a rival art thou of the spring!
For when each branch hath left his flourishing,
And green-locked summer's shady pleasures cease,
She makes the winter's storms repose in peace,
And spends her franchise on each living thing:
The daisies sprout, the little birds do sing,
Herbs, gums, and plants do vaunt of their release.
So when that all our English wits lay dead
(Except the Laurel that is ever green),
Thou with thy 'Fruits' our barrenness o'erspread,
And set thy flowery pleasance to be seen.
Such fruits, such flowerets of morality,
Were ne'er before brought out of Italy.

YOU that do search for every purling spring
Which from the ribs of old Parnassus flows,
And every flower, not sweet perhaps, which grows
Near thereabouts, into your posy wring;
You that do dictionary's method bring
Into your rhymes, running in rattling rows;
You that poor Petrarch's long-deceasèd woes
With new-born sighs and deniz'd wit do sing;
You take wrong ways! Those far-fet helps be such
As do bewray a want of inward touch:
And sure at length stolen goods do come to light.
But if, both for your love and skill, your name
You seek to nurse at fullest breasts of Fame,
Stella behold, and then begin t' endite.

WITH how sad steps, O Moon! thou climb'st the skies!
How silently, and with how wan a face!
What! may it be that even in heavenly place
That busy archer his sharp arrows tries?
Sure, if that long-with-love-acquainted eyes
Can judge of love, thou feel'st a lover's case;
I read it in thy looks: thy languished grace,
To me, that feel the like, thy state descries.
Then, even of fellowship, O Moon! tell me,
Is constant love deemed there but want of wit?
Are beauties there as proud as here they be?
Do they above love to be loved, and yet
Those lovers scorn whom that love doth possess?—
Do they call virtue there ungratefulness?

COME, Sleep, O Sleep! the certain knot of peace,
The baiting-place of wit, the balm of woe,
The poor man's wealth, the prisoner's release,
The indifferent judge between the high and low;
With shield of proof shield me from out the prease
Of those fierce darts Despair at me doth throw:
Oh, make in me those civil wars to cease!
I will good tribute pay if thou do so.
Take thou of me smooth pillows, sweetest bed,
A chamber deaf to noise and blind of light,
A rosy garland and a weary head:
And if these things, as being thine by right,
Move not thy heavy grace, thou shalt in me
Livelier than elsewhere Stella's image see.

HAVING this day my horse, my hand, my lance
Guided so well that I obtained the prize,
Both by the judgment of the English eyes
And of some sent from that sweet enemy, France;
Horsemen my skill in horsemanship advance;
Townfolks my strength; a daintier judge applies
His praise to sleight, which from good use doth rise;
Some lucky wits impute it but to chance;
Others, because of both sides I do take
My blood from them who did excel in this,
Think Nature me a man of arms did make.
How far they shot awry! The true cause is,
Stella looked on; and from her heavenly face
Sent forth the beams which made so fair my race.

BECAUSE I breathe not love to every one,
Nor do not use set colours for to wear,
Nor nourish special locks of vowèd hair,
Nor give each speech a full point of a groan,
The courtly nymphs, acquainted with the moan
Of them who in their lips Love's standard bear:
'What, he!' say they of me: 'now I dare swear
He cannot love. No, no, let him alone.'—
And think so still, so Stella know my mind!
Profess indeed I do not Cupid's art;
But you, fair maids, at length this true shall find,—
That his right badge is but worn in the heart:
Dumb swans, not chattering pies, do lovers prove
They love indeed who quake to say they love.

NO more, my dear, no more these counsels try;
Oh, give my passions leave to run their race!
Let Fortune lay on me her worst disgrace,
Let folk o'ercharged with brain against me cry;
Let clouds bedim my face, break in mine eye,
Let me no steps but of lost labour trace;
Let all the earth with scorn recount my case;
But do not will me from my love to fly.
I do not envy Aristotle's wit,
Nor do aspire to Cæsar's bleeding fame;
Nor ought do care though some above me sit;
Nor hope nor wish another course to frame,
But that which once may win thy cruel heart:
Thou art my wit, and thou my virtue art.

HIGHWAY! since you my chief Parnassus be,
And that my Muse, to some ears not unsweet,
Tempers her words to trampling horses' feet
More oft than to a chamber melody,—
Now blessèd you, bear onward blessèd me
To her, where I my heart safe-left shall meet;
My Muse and I must you of duty greet,
With thanks and wishes, wishing thankfully.
Be you still careful-kept by public heed,
By no encroachment wronged, nor time forgot,
Nor blamed for blood, nor shamed for sinful deed;
And that you know I envy you no lot
Of highest wish, I wish you so much bliss,
Hundreds of years you Stella's feet may kiss!

O HAPPY Thames, that didst my Stella bear!
I saw thee with full many a smiling line
Upon thy cheerful face Joy's livery wear,
While those fair planets on thy streams did shine;
The boat for joy could not to dance forbear,
While wanton winds, with beauties so divine
Ravished, stayed not, till in her golden hair
They did themselves (O sweetest prison!) twine.
And fain those Æol's youth there would their stay
Have made, but, forced by Nature still to fly,
First did with puffing kiss those locks display:
She, so dishevelled, blushed; from window I
With sight thereof cried out, 'O fair disgrace,
Let Honour' self to thee grant highest place!'

LEAVE me, O Love, which reachest but to dust,
And thou, my mind, aspire to higher things;
Grow rich in that which never taketh rust:
What ever fades but fading pleasure brings.
Draw in thy beams, and humble all thy might
To that sweet yoke where lasting freedoms be,
Which breaks the clouds and opens forth the light
That doth both shine and give us sight to see.
Oh, take fast hold! let that light be thy guide
In this small course which birth draws out to death,
And think how evil becometh him to slide
Who seeketh heaven, and comes of heavenly breath
Then farewell, world; thy uttermost I see:
Eternal Love, maintain thy life in me.

Splendidis longum valedico nugis.

SINCE Nature's works be good, and death doth serve
As Nature's work, why should we fear to die?
Since fear is vain but when it may preserve,
Why should we fear that which we cannot fly?
Fear is more pain than is the pain it fears,
Disarming human minds of native might;
While each conceit an ugly figure bears
Which were not evil, well viewed in reason's light.
Our owly eyes, which dimmed with passions be,
And scarce discern the dawn of coming day,
Let them be cleared, and now begin to see
Our life is but a step in dusty way.
Then let us hold the bliss of peaceful mind;
Since this we feel, great loss we cannot find.

TO SIR PHILIP SIDNEY'S SOUL.

GIVE pardon, blessèd soul, to my bold cries,
If they (importune) interrupt thy song
Which now, with joyful notes, thou sing'st among
The angel-quiristers of heavenly skies;
Give pardon eke, sweet soul, to my slow cries,
That since I saw thee now it is so long,
And yet the tears that unto thee belong
To thee as yet they did not sacrifice.
I did not know that thou wert dead before,
I did not feel the grief I did sustain:
The greater stroke astonisheth the more,
Astonishment takes from us sense of pain.
I stood amazed when others' tears begun,
And now begin to weep when they have done.

TO SAINT KATHARINE.

BECAUSE thou wast the daughter of a king,
Whose beauty did all Nature's works exceed,
And wisdom wonder to the world did breed,
A muse might rouse itself on Cupid's wing;
But, sith the graces which from nature spring
Were graced by those which from grace did proceed,
And glory have deserved, my Muse doth need
An angel's feathers when thy praise I sing.
For all in thee became angelical:
An angel's face had angels' purity,
And thou an angel's tongue didst speak withal;
Lo! why thy soul, set free by martyrdom,
Was crowned by God in angels' company,
And angels' hands thy body did entomb.

OF HIS MISTRESS:

UPON OCCASION OF HER WALKING IN A GARDEN.

MY lady's presence makes the roses red,
Because to see her lips they blush for shame:
The lily's leaves, for envy, pale became,
And her white hands in them this envy bred.
The marigold abroad her leaves doth spread,
Because the sun's and her power is the same;
The violet of purple colour came,
Dyed with the blood she made my heart to shed.
In brief, all flowers from her their virtue take:
From her sweet breath their sweet smells do proceed,
The living heat which her eye-beams do make
Warmeth the ground, and quickeneth the seed.
The rain wherewith she watereth these flowers
Falls from mine eyes, which she dissolves in showers.

PITY refusing my poor Love to feed,
A beggar starved for want of help he lies,
And at your mouth, the door of beauty, cries
That thence some alms of sweet grants may proceed.
But as he waiteth for some almës-deed
A cherry-tree before the door he spies—
'Oh dear!' quoth he, 'two cherries may suffice,
Two only life may save in this my need.'
But beggars, can they nought but cherries eat?
Pardon my Love, he is a goddess' son,
And never feedeth but on dainty meat,
Else need he not to pine as he hath done:
For only the sweet fruit of this sweet tree
Can give food to my Love, and life to me.

MUSES that sing Love's sensual empery,
And lovers kindling your enragèd fires
At Cupid's bonfires burning in the eye,
Blown with the empty breath of vain desires,—
You that prefer the painted cabinet
Before the wealthy jewels it doth store ye,
That all your joys in dying figures set,
And stain the living substance of your glory;
Abjure those joys, abhor their memory,
And let my Love the honoured subject be
Of love, and honour's complete history;
Your eyes were never yet let in to see
The majesty and riches of the mind,
But dwell in darkness; for your god is blind.

I SAW the object of my pining thought
Within a garden of sweet Nature's placing,
Wherein an arbour artificial wrought,
By workman's wondrous skill the garden gracing,
Did boast his glory, glory far renowned,
For in his shady boughs my mistress slept,
And with a garland of his branches crowned,
Her dainty forehead from the sun ykept.
Imperious Love upon her eyelids tending,
Playing his wanton sports at every beck,
And into every finest limb descending,
From eyes to lips, from lips to ivory neck;
And every limb supplied, and t' every part
Had free access, but durst not touch her heart.

WHAT meant the poets in invective verse
To sing Medea's shame, and Scylla's pride,
Calypso's charms by which so many died?
Only for this their vices they rehearse:
That curious wits, which in the world converse,
May shun the dangers and enticing shows
Of such false sirens, those home-breeding foes,
That from their eyes their venom do disperse.
So soon kills not the basilisk with sight;
The viper's tooth is not so venomous;
The adder's tongue not half so dangerous,
As they that bear the shadow of delight,
Who chain blind youths in trammels of their hair,
Till waste brings woe, and sorrow hastes despair.

LOOK, Delia, how w' esteem the half-blown rose,
The image of thy blush and summer's honour,
Whilst yet her tender bud doth undisclose
That full of beauty Time bestows upon her.
No sooner spreads her glory in the air,
But straight her wide-blown pomp comes to decline;
She then is scorned that late adorned the fair;
So fade the roses of those cheeks of thine.
No April can revive thy withered flowers,
Whose springing grace adorns thy glory now;
Swift speedy Time, feathered with flying hours,
Dissolves the beauty of the fairest brow.
Then do not thou such treasure waste in vain,
But love now whilst thou mayst be loved again.

CARE-CHARMER Sleep, son of the sable Night,
Brother to Death, in silent darkness born,
Relieve my languish, and restore the light;
With dark forgetting of my cares return,
And let the day be time enough to mourn
The shipwreck of my ill-adventured youth:
Let waking eyes suffice to wail their scorn,
Without the torment of the night's untruth.
Cease, dreams, the images of day-desires,
To model forth the passions of the morrow;
Never let rising Sun approve you liars,
To add more grief to aggravate my sorrow:
Still let me sleep, embracing clouds in vain,
And never wake to feel the day's disdain.

CLEAR Anker, on whose silver-sanded shore
My soul-shrined saint, my fair Idea, lies;
O blessèd brook, whose milk-white swans adore
Thy crystal stream, refinèd by her eyes!
Where sweet myrrh-breathing Zephyr in the spring
Gently distils his nectar-dropping showers,
Where nightingales in Arden sit and sing
Amongst the dainty dew-impearlèd flowers;
Say thus, fair brook, when thou shalt see thy queen,—
'Lo, here thy shepherd spent his wandering years,
And in these shades, dear nymph, he oft hath been,
And here to thee he sacrificed his tears.'
Fair Arden, thou my Tempe art alone,
And thou, sweet Anker, art my Helicon.

DEAR, why should you command me to my rest,
When now the night doth summon all to sleep?
Methinks this time becometh lovers best:
Night was ordained together friends to keep.
How happy are all other living things,
Which though the day disjoin by several flight,
The quiet Evening yet together brings,
And each returns unto his love at night!
O thou that art so courteous else to all,
Why shouldst thou, Night, abuse me only thus,
That every creature to his kind dost call,
And yet 'tis thou dost only sever us?
Well could I wish it would be ever day,
If when night comes, you bid me go away.

LOVE, banished heaven, in earth was held in scorn,
Wandering abroad in need and beggary,
And wanting friends, though of a goddess born,
Yet craved the alms of such as passèd by;
I, like a man devout and charitable,
Clothèd the naked, lodged this wandering guest,
With sighs and tears still furnishing his table,
With what might make the miserable blest.
But this ungrateful, for my good desert,
Inticed my thoughts against me to conspire,
Who gave consent to steal away my heart,
And set my breast, his lodging, on a fire.
Well, well, my friends, when beggars grow thus bold,
No marvel then though charity grow cold!

SINCE there's no help, come let us kiss and part,—
Nay I have done, you get no more of me;
And I am glad, yea glad with all my heart,
That thus so cleanly I myself can free;
Shake hands for ever, cancel all our vows,
And when we meet at any time again,
Be it not seen in either of our brows
That we one jot of former love retain.
Now at the last gasp of Love's latest breath,
When, his pulse failing, Passion speechless lies,
When Faith is kneeling by his bed of death,
And Innocence is closing up his eyes,—
Now if thou wouldst, when all have given him over,
From death to life thou mightst him yet recover!

THE MOON.

LOOK how the pale queen of the silent night
Doth cause the Ocean to attend upon her,
And he, as long as she is in his sight,
With his full tide is ready her to honour;
But when the silver waggon of the Moon
Is mounted up so high he cannot follow,
The Sea calls home his crystal waves to moan,
And with low ebb doth manifest his sorrow.
So you, that are the sovereign of my heart,
Have all my joys attending on your will,
My joys low-ebbing when you do depart,—
When you return, their tide my heart doth fill:
So as you come, and as you do depart,
Joys ebb and flow within my tender heart.

THRICE toss these oaken ashes in the air,
And thrice three times tie up this true-love's-knot;
Thrice sit thee down in this enchanted chair,
And murmur soft, 'She will, or she will not.'
Go burn these poisoned weeds in that blue fire,
This cypress gathered at a dead man's grave,
These screech-owl's feathers, and this pricking briar,
That all thy thorny cares an end may have.
Then come, you fairies, dance with me a round,
Dance in this circle, let my Love be centre,
Melodiously breathe out a charming sound,
Melt her hard heart, that some remorse may enter.
In vain are all the charms I can devise!
She hath an art to break them with her eyes.

WERE I as base as is the lowly plain,
And you, my Love, as high as heaven above,
Yet should the thoughts of me your humble swain
Ascend to heaven in honour of my Love.
Were I as high as heaven above the plain,
And you, my Love, as humble and as low
As are the deepest bottoms of the main,
Wheresoe'er you were, with you my love should go.
Were you the earth, dear Love, and I the skies,
My love should shine on you like to the sun,
And look upon you with ten thousand eyes,
Till heaven waxed blind, and till the world were done.
Wheresoe'er I am, below or else above you,
Wheresoe'er you are, my heart shall truly love you.

AH, sweet Content, where is thy mild abode?
Is it with shepherds and light-hearted swains
Which sing upon the downs and pipe abroad,
Tending their flocks and cattle on the plains?
Ah, sweet Content, where dost thou safely rest?
In heaven, with angels which the praises sing
Of Him that made, and rules at his behest,
The minds and hearts of every living thing?
Ah, sweet Content, where doth thine harbour hold?
Is it in churches with religious men
Which please the gods with prayers manifold,
And in their studies meditate it then?—
Whether thou dost in heaven or earth appear,
Be where thou wilt, thou will not harbour here.

UNTO my spirit lend an angel's wing
By which it might mount to that place of rest
Where Paradise may me relieve oppress ;
Lend to my tongue an angel's voice to sing
Thy praise my comfort, and for ever bring
My notes thereof from the bright east to west.
Thy mercy lend unto my soul distrest,
Thy grace unto my wits ; then shall the sling
Of righteousness that monster Satan kill,
Who with despair my dear salvation dared,
And like the Philistine stood breathing still
Proud threats against my soul for heaven prepared :
At length I like an angel shall appear,
In spotless white an angel's crown to wear.

TO HIS FRIEND MAISTER R. L.

IN PRAISE OF MUSIC AND POETRY.

IF music and sweet poetry agree,
As they must needs, the sister and the brother,
Then must the love be great 'twixt thee and me,
Because thou lov'st the one, and I the other.
Dowland to thee is dear, whose heavenly touch
Upon the lute doth ravish human sense;
Spenser to me, whose deep conceit is such
As passing all conceit needs no defence.
Thou lov'st to hear the sweet melodious sound
That Phœbus' lute, the queen of music, makes;
And I in deep delight am chiefly drowned
Whenas himself to singing he betakes.
One god is god of both, as poets feign;
One knight loves both, and both in thee remain.

MUSIC to hear, why hear'st thou music sadly?
Sweets with sweets war not, joy delights in joy.
Why lov'st thou that which thou receiv'st not gladly,
Or else receiv'st with pleasure thine annoy?
If the true concord of well-tunèd sounds,
By unions married, do offend thine ear,
They do but sweetly chide thee, who confounds
In singleness the parts that thou shouldst bear.
Mark how one string, sweet husband to another,
Strikes each in each by mutual ordering,
Resembling sire and child and happy mother,
Who, all in one, one pleasing note do sing:
Whose speechless song, being many, seeming one,
Sings this to thee: 'Thou single wilt prove none.'

WHEN I do count the clock that tells the time,
And see the brave day sunk in hideous night;
When I behold the violet past prime,
And sable curls all silvered o'er with white;
When lofty trees I see barren of leaves,
Which erst from heat did canopy the herd,
And summer's green, all girded up in sheaves,
Borne on the bier with white and bristly beard:
Then of thy beauty do I question make,
That thou among the wastes of time must go,
Since sweets and beauties do themselves forsake,
And die as fast as they see others grow;
And nothing 'gainst Time's scythe can make defence
Save breed, to brave him when he takes thee hence.

WHO will believe my verse in time to come,
If it were filled with your most high deserts?
Though yet, heaven knows, it is but as a tomb
Which hides your life, and shows not half your parts.
If I could write the beauty of your eyes,
And in fresh numbers number all your graces,
The age to come would say, 'This poet lies;
Such heavenly touches ne'er touched earthly faces.'
So should my papers, yellowed with their age,
Be scorned, like old men of less truth than tongue,
And your true rights be termed a poet's rage,
And stretchèd metre of an antique song:
But were some child of yours alive that time,
You should live twice,—in it, and in my rhyme.

SHALL I compare thee to a summer's day?
Thou art more lovely and more temperate:
Rough winds do shake the darling buds of May,
And summer's lease hath all too short a date:
Sometime too hot the eye of heaven shines,
And often is his gold complexion dimmed;
And every fair from fair sometime declines,
By chance or nature's changing course untrimmed;
But thy eternal summer shall not fade
Nor lose possession of that fair thou ow'st;
Nor shall Death brag thou wander'st in his shade,
When in eternal lines to time thou grow'st:
So long as men can breathe or eyes can see,
So long lives this, and this gives life to thee.

WHEN in disgrace with fortune and men's eyes,
I all alone beweep my outcast state,
And trouble deaf heaven with my bootless cries,
And look upon myself, and curse my fate,
Wishing me like to one more rich in hope,
Featured like him, like him with friends possest,
Desiring this man's art, and that man's scope,
With what I most enjoy contented least;
Yet in these thoughts myself almost despising,
Haply I think on thee,—and then my state,
Like to the lark at break of day arising
From sullen earth, sings hymns at heaven's gate;
For thy sweet love remembered such wealth brings,
That then I scorn to change my state with kings.

WHEN to the sessions of sweet silent thought
I summon up remembrance of things past,
I sigh the lack of many a thing I sought,
And with old woes new wail my dear time's waste:
Then can I drown an eye, unused to flow,
For precious friends hid in death's dateless night,
And weep afresh love's long-since-cancelled woe,
And moan the expense of many a vanished sight:
Then can I grieve at grievances foregone,
And heavily from woe to woe tell o'er
The sad account of fore-bemoanèd moan,
Which I new pay as if not paid before.
But if the while I think on thee, dear friend,
All losses are restored, and sorrows end.

IF thou survive my well-contented day,
When that churl Death my bones with dust shall cover,
And shalt by fortune once more resurvey
These poor rude lines of thy deceasèd lover,
Compare them with the bettering of the time;
And though they be outstripped by every pen,
Reserve them for my love, not for their rhyme,
Exceeded by the height of happier men.
Oh, then vouchsafe me but this loving thought,—
'Had my friend's Muse grown with this growing age,
A dearer birth than this his love had brought,
To march in ranks of better equipage;
But since he died, and poets better prove,
Theirs for their style I'll read, his for his love.'

FULL many a glorious morning have I seen
Flatter the mountain-tops with sovereign eye,
Kissing with golden face the meadows green,
Gilding pale streams with heavenly alchemy;
Anon permit the basest clouds to ride
With ugly rack on his celestial face,
And from the forlorn world his visage hide,
Stealing unseen to west with this disgrace:
Even so my sun one early morn did shine
With all-triumphant splendour on my brow;
But out, alack! he was but one hour mine;
The region cloud hath masked him from me now.
Yet him for this my love no whit disdaineth;
Suns of the world may stain, when heaven's sun
staineth.

SO am I as the rich, whose blessèd key
Can bring him to his sweet up-lockèd treasure,
The which he will not every hour survey,
For blunting the fine point of seldom pleasure.
Therefore are feasts so solemn and so rare,
Since, seldom coming, in the long year set,
Like stones of worth they thinly placèd are,
Or captain jewels in the carcanet.
So is the time that keeps you, as my chest,
Or as the wardrobe which the robe doth hide,
To make some special instant special-blest,
By new unfolding his imprisoned pride.
Blessèd are you, whose worthiness gives scope,
Being had, to triumph, being lacked, to hope.

OH, how much more doth beauty beauteous seem
By that sweet ornament which truth doth give!
The rose looks fair, but fairer we it deem
For that sweet odour which doth in it live.
The canker-blooms have full as deep a dye
As the perfumèd tincture of the roses,
Hang on such thorns, and play as wantonly
When summer's breath their maskèd buds discloses:
But for their virtue only is their show,
They live unwooed, and unrespected fade—
Die to themselves. Sweet roses do not so;
Of their sweet deaths are sweetest odours made:
And so of you, beauteous and lovely youth,
When that shall fade, by verse distils your truth.

BEING your slave, what should I do but tend
Upon the hours and times of your desire?
I have no precious time at all to spend,
Nor services to do, till you require.
Nor dare I chide the world-without-end hour,
Whilst I, my sovereign, watch the clock for you,
Nor think the bitterness of absence sour,
When you have bid your servant once adieu;
Nor dare I question with my jealous thought
Where you may be, or your affairs suppose,
But, like a sad slave, stay and think of nought
Save, where you are how happy you make those.
So true a fool is love, that in your will
Though you do anything, he thinks no ill.

LIKE as the waves make towards the pebbled shore,
So do our minutes hasten to their end;
Each changing place with that which goes before,
In sequent toil all forwards do contend.
Nativity, once in the main of light,
Crawls to maturity, wherewith being crowned,
Crookèd eclipses 'gainst his glory fight,
And Time, that gave, doth now his gift confound.
Time doth transfix the flourish set on youth,
And delves the parallels in beauty's brow,
Feeds on the rarities of nature's truth,
And nothing stands but for his scythe to mow:
And yet to times in hope my verse shall stand,
Praising thy worth, despite his cruel hand.

WHEN I have seen by Time's fell hand defaced
The rich-proud cost of outworn buried age;
When sometime lofty towers I see down-razed,
And brass eternal slave to mortal rage;
When I have seen the hungry ocean gain
Advantage on the kingdom of the shore,
And the firm soil win of the watery main,
Increasing store with loss, and loss with store;
When I have seen such interchange of state,
Or state itself confounded to decay;
Ruin hath taught me thus to ruminate,
That Time will come and take my Love away.
This thought is as a death, which cannot choose
But weep to have that which it fears to lose.

SINCE brass, nor stone, nor earth, nor boundless sea,
But sad mortality o'ersways their power,
How with this rage shall beauty hold a plea,
Whose action is no stronger than a flower?
Oh, how shall summer's honey breath hold out
Against the wreckful siege of battering days,
When rocks impregnable are not so stout,
Nor gates of steel so strong, but Time decays?
Oh, fearful meditation! where, alack,
Shall Time's best jewel from Time's chest lie hid?
Or what strong hand can hold his swift foot back?
Or who his spoil of beauty can forbid?
Oh, none, unless this miracle have might,
That in black ink my Love may still shine bright.

TIRED with all these, for restful death I cry,—
As, to behold desert a beggar born,
And needy nothing trimmed in jollity,
And purest faith unhappily forsworn,
And gilded honour shamefully misplaced,
And maiden virtue rudely strumpeted,
And right perfection wrongfully disgraced,
And strength by limping sway disablèd,
And art made tongue-tied by authority,
And folly, doctor-like, controlling skill,
And simple truth miscalled simplicity,
And captive good attending captain ill:
Tired with all these, from these would I be gone,
Save that, to die, I leave my Love alone.

NO longer mourn for me when I am dead
Than you shall hear the surly sullen bell
Give warning to the world that I am fled
From this vile world, with vilest worms to dwell:
Nay, if you read this line, remember not
The hand that writ it; for I love you so
That I in your sweet thoughts would be forgot,
If thinking on me then should make you woe.
Oh, if, I say, you look upon this verse
When I perhaps compounded am with clay,
Do not so much as my poor name rehearse,
But let your love even with my life decay,—
Lest the wise world should look into your moan,
And mock you with me after I am gone.

THAT time of year thou mayst in me behold
When yellow leaves, or none, or few, do hang
Upon those boughs which shake against the cold,
Bare ruined choirs where late the sweet birds sang:
In me thou see'st the twilight of such day
As after sunset fadeth in the west,
Which by-and-by black night doth take away,
Death's second self, that seals up all in rest.
In me thou see'st the glowing of such fire,
That on the ashes of his youth doth lie,
As the death-bed whereon it must expire,
Consumed with that which it was nourished by:—
This thou perceiv'st, which makes thy love more strong,
To love that well which thou must leave ere long.

FAREWELL! thou art too dear for my possessing,
And like enough thou know'st thy estimate:
The charter of thy worth gives thee releasing;
My bonds in thee are all determinate.
For how do I hold thee but by thy granting?
And for that riches where is my deserving?
The cause of this fair gift in me is wanting,
And so my patent back again is swerving.
Thyself thou gav'st, thy own worth then not knowing,
Or me, to whom thou gav'st it, else mistaking;
So thy great gift, upon misprision growing,
Comes home again, on better judgment making.
Thus have I had thee, as a dream doth flatter;
In sleep a king, but, waking, no such matter.

THEY that have power to hurt and will do none,
That do not do the thing they most do show,
Who, moving others, are themselves as stone,
Unmovèd, cold, and to temptation slow,—
They rightly do inherit heaven's graces,
And husband nature's riches from expense;
They are the lords and owners of their faces,
Others but stewards of their excellence.
The summer's flower is to the summer sweet,
Though to itself it only live and die;
But if that flower with base infection meet,
The basest weed outbraves his dignity:
For sweetest things turn sourest by their deeds;
Lilies that fester smell far worse than weeds.

HOW like a winter hath my absence been
From thee, the pleasure of the fleeting year!
What freezings have I felt, what dark days seen!
What old December's bareness everywhere!
And yet this time removed was summer's time;
The teeming autumn, big with rich increase,
Bearing the wanton burthen of the prime,
Like widowed wombs after their lords' decease:
Yet this abundant issue seemed to me
But hope of orphans, and unfathered fruit;
For summer and his pleasures wait on thee,
And, thou away, the very birds are mute;
Or, if they sing, 'tis with so dull a cheer
That leaves look pale, dreading the winter's near.

FROM you have I been absent in the spring,
When proud-pied April, dressed in all his trim,
Hath put a spirit of youth in everything,
That heavy Saturn laughed and leaped with him.
Yet nor the lays of birds, nor the sweet smell
Of different flowers in odour and in hue,
Could make me any summer's story tell,
Or from their proud lap pluck them where they grew;
Nor did I wonder at the lily's white,
Nor praise the deep vermilion in the rose;
They were but sweet, but figures of delight,
Drawn after you,—you pattern of all those.
Yet seemed it winter still, and, you away,
As with your shadow I with these did play.

MY love is strengthened, though more weak in seeming;
I love not less, though less the show appear:
That love is merchandized whose rich esteeming
The owner's tongue doth publish everywhere.
Our love was new, and then but in the spring,
When I was wont to greet it with my lays;
As Philomel in summer's front doth sing,
And stops her pipe in growth of riper days:
Not that the summer is less pleasant now
Than when her mournful hymns did hush the night,
But that wild music burthens every bough,
And sweets grown common lose their dear delight.
Therefore like her I sometime hold my tongue,
Because I would not dull you with my song.

TO me, fair Friend, you never can be old,
For as you were when first your eye I eyed,
Such seems your beauty still. Three winters cold
Have from the forest shook three summers' pride,
Three beauteous springs to yellow autumn turned
In process of the seasons have I seen,
Three April perfumes in three hot Junes burned,
Since first I saw you fresh, which yet are green.
Ah! yet doth beauty, like a dial-hand,
Steal from his figure, and no pace perceived;
So your sweet hue, which methinks still doth stand,
Hath motion, and mine eye may be deceived:
For fear of which, hear this, thou age unbred,—
Ere you were born was beauty's summer dead.

WHEN in the chronicle of wasted time
I see descriptions of the fairest wights,
And beauty making beautiful old rhyme
In praise of ladies dead and lovely knights;
Then, in the blazon of sweet beauty's best,
Of hand, of foot, of lip, of eye, of brow,
I see their antique pen would have expressed
Even such a beauty as you master now.
So all their praises are but prophecies
Of this our time, all you prefiguring;
And for they looked but with divining eyes,
They had not skill enough your worth to sing:
For we, which now behold these present days,
Have eyes to wonder, but lack tongues to praise.

OH, never say that I was false of heart,
Though absence seemed my flame to qualify.
As easy might I from myself depart
As from my soul, which in thy breast doth lie:
That is my home of love: if I have ranged,
Like him that travels I return again,
Just to the time, not with the time exchanged,—
So that myself bring water for my stain.
Never believe, though in my nature reigned
All frailties that besiege all kinds of blood,
That it could so preposterously be stained,
To leave for nothing all thy sum of good;
For nothing this wide universe I call,
Save thou, my rose; in it thou art my all.

LET me not to the marriage of true minds
Admit impediments. Love is not love
Which alters when it alteration finds,
Or bends with the remover to remove:
Oh no! it is an ever-fixèd mark
That looks on tempests and is never shaken;
It is the star to every wandering bark,
Whose worth's unknown although his height be taken.
Love's not Time's fool, though rosy lips and cheeks
Within his bending sickle's compass come;
Love alters not with his brief hours and weeks,
But bears it out even to the edge of doom.
If this be error, and upon me proved,
I never writ, nor no man ever loved.

THE expense of spirit in a waste of shame
Is lust in action ; and till action, lust
Is perjured, murderous, bloody, full of blame,
Savage, extreme, rude, cruel, not to trust ;
Enjoyed no sooner but despisèd straight ;
Past reason hunted ; and no sooner had,
Past reason hated, as a swallowed bait
On purpose laid to make the taker mad :
Mad in pursuit and in possession so ;
Had, having, and in quest to have, extreme ;
A bliss in proof,—and proved, a very woe ;
Before, a joy proposed ; behind, a dream.
All this the world well knows ; yet none knows well
To shun the heaven that leads men to this hell.

POOR Soul, the centre of my sinful earth,
Fooled by these rebel powers that thee array,
Why dost thou pine within and suffer dearth,
Painting thy outward walls so costly gay?
Why so large cost, having so short a lease,
Dost thou upon thy fading mansion spend?
Shall worms, inheritors of this excess,
Eat up thy charge? Is this thy body's end?
Then, Soul, live thou upon thy servant's loss,
And let that pine to aggravate thy store;
Buy terms divine in selling hours of dross;
Within be fed, without be rich no more:
So shalt thou feed on Death, that feeds on men,
And Death once dead, there's no more dying then!

WHILES in my Soul I feel the soft warm hand
Of Grace, to thaw the frozen dregs of sin,
She, angel, armed, on Eden's walls doth stand,
To keep out outward joys that would come in;
But when that holy hand is ta'en away,
And that my Soul congealeth as before,
She outward comforts seeks with care each way,
And runs to meet them at each sense's door.
Yet they but at the first sight only please,
Then shrink, or breed abhorred satiety;
But divine comforts, far unlike to these,
Do please the more, the more they stay and be.
Then outward joys I inwardly detest,
Sith they stay not, or stay but in unrest.

DEATH, be not proud, though some have callèd thee
Mighty and dreadful, for thou art not so;
For those whom thou think'st thou dost overthrow
Die not, poor Death; nor yet canst thou kill me.
From rest and sleep, which but thy pictures be,
Much pleasure: then from thee much more must flow;
And soonest our best men with thee do go—
Rest of their bones and souls' delivery!
Thou'rt slave to fate, chance, kings, and desperate men,
And dost with poison, war, and sickness dwell;
And poppy or charms can make us sleep as well,
And better than thy stroke. Why swell'st thou then?
One short sleep past, we wake eternally,
And death shall be no more: Death, thou shalt die.

OH, if thou knew'st how thou thyself dost harm,
And dost prejudge thy bliss, and spoil my rest;
Then thou wouldst melt the ice out of thy breast,
And thy relenting heart would kindly warm.
Oh, if thy pride did not our joys controul,
What world of loving wonders shouldst thou see!
For if I saw thee once transformed in me,
Then in thy bosom I would pour my soul,
Then all thy thoughts should in my visage shine;
And if that ought mischanced, thou shouldst not moan
Nor bear the burthen of thy griefs alone;
No, I would have my share in what were thine:
And whilst we thus should make our sorrows one,
This happy harmony would make them none.

I KNOW that all beneath the moon decays,
And what by mortals in this world is brought,
In Time's great periods shall return to nought;
That fairest states have fatal nights and days;
I know how all the Muse's heavenly lays,
With toil of spright which are so dearly bought,
As idle sounds of few or none are sought,
And that nought lighter is than airy praise.
I know frail beauty like the purple flower,
To which one morn oft birth and death affords;
That love a jarring is of minds' accords,
Where sense and will invassal reason's power:
Know what I list, this all can not me move,
But that, oh me! I both must write and love.

SLEEP, Silence' child, sweet father of soft rest,
Prince whose approach peace to all mortals brings,
Indifferent host to shepherds and to kings,
Sole comforter of minds with grief opprest;
Lo! by thy charming-rod all breathing things
Lie slumbering, with forgetfulness possest,
And yet o'er me to spread thy drowsy wings
Thou spares, alas! who cannot be thy guest.
Since I am thine, oh come, but with that face
To inward light which thou art wont to show;
With feignèd solace ease a true-felt woe;
Or if, deaf god, thou do deny that grace,
Come as thou wilt, and what thou wilt bequeath,—
I long to kiss the image of my death.

AH! burning thoughts, now let me take some rest,
And your tumultuous broils awhile appease;
Is't not enough, stars, fortune, love molest
Me all at once, but ye must to displease?
Let hope, though false, yet lodge within my breast;
My high attempt, though dangerous, yet praise.
What though I trace not right heaven's steepy ways?
It doth suffice my fall shall make me blest.
I do not doat on days, nor fear not death:
So that my life be brave, what though not long?
Let me renowned live from the vulgar throng,
And when ye list, Heavens! take this borrowed breath.
Men but like visions are, time all doth claim:
He lives who dies to win a lasting name.

IN vain I haunt the cold and silver springs,
To quench the fever burning in my veins;
In vain, love's pilgrim, mountains, dales, and plains,
I overrun; vain help long absence brings:
In vain, my friends, your counsel me constrains
To fly, and place my thoughts on other things.
Ah! like the bird that firèd hath her wings,
The more I move, the greater are my pains.
Desire, alas! Desire, a Zeuxis new,
From Indies borrowing gold, from western skies
Most bright cinoper, sets before mine eyes,
In every place, her hair, sweet look, and hue;
That fly, run, rest I, all doth prove but vain:
My life lies in those looks which have me slain.

IF crost with all mishaps be my poor life,
If one short day I never spent in mirth,
If my spright with itself holds lasting strife,
If sorrow's death is but new sorrow's birth;
If this vain world be but a sable stage
Where slave-born man plays to the scoffing stars;
If youth be tossed with love, with weakness age,
If knowledge serve to hold our thoughts in wars;
If Time can close the hundred mouths of Fame,
And make what long since passed like that to be;
If virtue only be an idle name;
If I when I was born was born to die;
Why seek I to prolong these loathsome days?
The fairest rose in shortest time decays.

ALEXIS, here she stayed; among these pines,
Sweet hermitress, she did alone repair;
Here did she spread the treasure of her hair,
More rich than that brought from the Colchian mines;
She set her by these muskèd eglantines—
The happy place the print seems yet to bear;
Her voice did sweeten here thy sugared lines,
To which winds, trees, beasts, birds, did lend their ear;
Me here she first perceived, and here a morn
Of bright carnations did o'erspread her face;
Here did she sigh, here first my hopes were born,
And I first got a pledge of promised grace;
But ah! what served it to be happy so,
Sith passèd pleasures double but new woe?

MY lute, be as thou wast when thou didst grow
With thy green mother in some shady grove,
When immelodious winds but made thee move,
And birds on thee their ramage did bestow.
Sith that dear voice which did thy sounds approve,
Which used in such harmonious strains to flow,
Is reft from earth to tune those spheres above,
What art thou but a harbinger of woe?
Thy pleasing notes be pleasing notes no more,
But orphan wailings to the fainting ear;
Each stop a sigh, each sound draws forth a tear;
Be therefore silent as in woods before:
Or if that any hand to touch thee deign,
Like widowed turtle still her loss complain.

SWEET Spring, thou turn'st with all thy goodly train,
Thy head with flames, thy mantle bright with flowers;
The zephyrs curl the green locks of the plain,
The clouds for joy in pearls weep down their showers:
Thou turn'st, sweet youth; but ah! my pleasant hours
And happy days with thee come not again:
The sad memorials only of my pain
Do with thee turn, which turn my sweets in sours.
Thou art the same which still thou wast before,
Delicious, wanton, amiable, fair;
But she, whose breath embalmed thy wholesome air,
Is gone; nor gold, nor gems her can restore.
Neglected Virtue! seasons go and come,
While thine, forgot, lie closèd in a tomb.

WHAT doth it serve to see Sun's burning face,
And skies enamelled with both Indies' gold?
Or moon at night in jetty chariot rolled,
And all the glory of that starry place?
What doth it serve earth's beauty to behold,—
The mountains' pride, the meadows' flowery grace,
The stately comeliness of forests old,
The sport of floods which would themselves embrace?
What doth it serve to hear the sylvans' songs,
The wanton merle, the nightingale's sad strains,
Which in dark shades seem to deplore my wrongs?—
For what doth serve all that this world contains,
Sith she for whom those once to me were dear
No part of them can have now with me here?

NO TRUST IN TIME.

LOOK how the flower which lingeringly doth fade,
The morning's darling late, the summer's queen,
Spoiled of that juice which kept it fresh and green,
As high as it did raise, bows low the head:
Right so my life, contentments being dead,
Or in their contraries but only seen,
With swifter speed declines than erst it spread,
And blasted, scarce now shows what it hath been.
As doth the pilgrim therefore, whom the night
By darkness would imprison on his way,
Think on thy home, my soul, and think aright
Of what yet rests thee of life's wasting day;
Thy sun posts westward, passèd is thy morn,
And twice it is not given thee to be born.

THE BOOK OF THE WORLD.

OF this fair volume which we World do name
If we the sheets and leaves could turn with care,
Of Him who it corrects and did it frame,
We clear might read the art and wisdom rare:
Find out his power which wildest powers doth tame,
His providence extending everywhere,
His justice which proud rebels doth not spare,
In every page, no, period of the same.
But silly we, like foolish children, rest
Well pleased with coloured vellum, leaves of gold,
Fair dangling ribbons, leaving what is best,
On the great writer's sense ne'er taking hold;
Or if by chance we stay our minds on ought,
It is some picture on the margin wrought.

THE NATIVITY OF OUR LORD.

I.—THE ANGELS.

RUN, shepherds, run where Bethlehem blest appears!
We bring the best of news, be not dismayed:
A Saviour there is born, more old than years,
Amidst heaven's rolling heights this earth who stayed.
In a poor cottage inned, a virgin maid
A weakling did Him bear who all upbears;
There is He poorly swaddled, in manger laid,
To whom too narrow swaddlings are our spheres.
Run, shepherds, run, and solemnize his birth:
This is that night, no, day grown great with bliss,
In which the power of Satan broken is:
In heaven be glory, peace upon the earth!
Thus singing through the air the angels swam,
And cope of stars re-echoèd the same.

THE NATIVITY OF OUR LORD.

II.—THE SHEPHERDS.

OH, than the fairest day thrice fairer night!
Night to best days in which a Sun doth rise
Of which that golden eye which clears the skies
Is but a sparkling ray, a shadow light;
And blessèd ye, in silly pastors' sight,
Mild creätures, in whose warm crib now lies
That heaven-sent youngling, holy-maid-born wight,
Midst, end, beginning of our prophecies.
Blest cottage, that hath flowers in winter spread;
Though withered, blessèd grass, that hath the grace
To deck and be a carpet to that place.
Thus sang, unto the sounds of oaten reed,
Before the Babe, the shepherds bowed on knees;
And springs ran nectar, honey dropt from trees.

THE BAPTIST.

THE last and greatest herald of heaven's King,
Girt with rough skins, hies to the deserts wild,
Among that savage brood the woods forth bring,
Which he than man more harmless found and mild.
His food was locusts, and what there doth spring,
With honey that from virgin hives distilled;
Parcht body, hollow eyes, some uncouth thing
Made him appear, long since from earth exiled.
There burst he forth: All ye whose hopes rely
On God, with me amidst these deserts mourn,
Repent, repent, and from old errors turn!—
Who listened to his voice, obeyed his cry?
Only the echoes, which he made relent,
Rung from their flinty caves, Repent! Repent!

THE MAGDALEN.

THESE eyes, dear Lord! once brandons of desire,
Frail scouts betraying what they had to keep,
Which their own heart, then others set on fire,
Their traitrous black before Thee here outweep:
These locks, of blushing deeds the fair attire,
Smooth-frizzled waves, sad shelves which shadow deep,
Soul-stinging serpents in gilt curls which creep,
To touch thy sacred feet do now aspire.
In seas of care behold a sinking bark,
By winds of sharp remorse unto Thee driven;
Oh, let me not exposed be ruin's mark!
My faults confest,—Lord, say they are forgiven.
Thus sighed to Jesus the Bethanian fair,
His tear-wet feet still drying with her hair.

TO A NIGHTINGALE.

SWEET bird, that sing'st away the early hours,
Of winters past or coming void of care,
Well pleasèd with delights which present are,
Fair seasons, budding sprays, sweet-smelling flowers;
To rocks, to springs, to rills, from leafy bowers
Thou thy Creator's goodness dost declare,
And what dear gifts on thee He did not spare,
A stain to human sense in sin that lowers.
What soul can be so sick which by thy songs,
Attired in sweetness, sweetly is not driven
Quite to forget earth's turmoils, spites, and wrongs,
And lift a reverend eye and thought to heaven!
Sweet artless songster, thou my mind dost raise
To airs of spheres, yes, and to angels' lays.

CONTENT AND RESOLUTE.

AS when it happeneth that some lovely town
Unto a barbarous besieger falls,
Who there by sword and flame himself installs,
And, cruel, it in tears and blood doth drown;
Her beauty spoiled, her citizens made thralls,
His spite yet so can not her all throw down
But that some statue, arch, fane of renown
Yet lurks unmaimed within her weeping walls:
So, after all the spoil, disgrace, and wrack,
That time, the world, and death, could bring combined,
Amidst that mass of ruins they did make,
Safe and all scarless yet remains my mind.
From this so high transcending rapture springs,
That I, all else defaced, not envy kings.

EARTH AND ALL ON IT CHANGEABLE.

THAT space where raging waves do now divide
From the great continent our happy isle
Was sometime land, and where tall ships do glide
Once with dear art the crookèd plough did toil;
Once those fair bounds stretcht out so far and wide,
Where towns, no, shires enwalled, endear each mile,
Were all ignoble sea and marish vile,
Where Proteus' flocks danced measures to the tide.
So age, transforming all, still forward runs;
No wonder though the Earth doth change her face!
New manners, pleasures new, turn with new suns,
Locks, now like gold, grow to an hoary grace;
Nay, mind's rare shape doth change, that lies despised,
Which was so dear of late and highly prized.

DOTH then the world go thus, doth all thus move?
Is this the justice which on earth we find?
Is this that firm decree which all doth bind?
Are these your influences, Powers above?
Those souls which vice's moody mists most blind,
Blind Fortune, blindly, most their friend doth prove;
And they who thee, poor idol Virtue! love,
Ply like a feather tossed by storm and wind.
Ah! if a Providence doth sway this All,
Why should best minds groan under most distress?
Or why should pride humility make thrall,
And injuries the innocent oppress?
Heavens! hinder, stop this fate; or grant a time
When good may have, as well as bad, their prime.

BEFORE A POEM OF IRENE.

MOURN not, fair Greece, the ruin of thy kings,
Thy temples razed, thy forts with flames devoured,
Thy champions slain, thy virgins pure deflowered,
Nor all those griefs which stern Bellona brings:
But mourn, fair Greece, mourn that that sacred band
Which made thee once so famous by their songs,
Forc't by outrageous fate, have left thy land,
And left thee scarce a voice to plain thy wrongs!
Mourn that those climates which to thee appear
Beyond both Phœbus and his sister's ways,
To save thy deeds from death must lend thee lays,
And such as from Musæus thou didst hear;
For now Irene hath attained such fame,
That Hero's ghost doth weep to hear her name.

FAIREST, when by the rules of palmistry
You took my hand to try if you could guess,
By lines therein, if any wight there be
Ordained to make me know some happiness,
I wished that those charácters could explain
Whom I will never wrong with hope to win;
Or that by them a copy might be seen
By you, O Love, what thoughts I have within.
But since the hand of Nature did not set
(As providently loth to have it known)
The means to find that hidden alphabet,
Mine eyes shall be th' interpreters alone.
By them conceive my thoughts, and tell me, fair,
If now you see her that doth love me there!

A ROSE, as fair as ever saw the north,
Grew in a little garden all alone :
A sweeter flower did Nature ne'er put forth,
Nor fairer garden yet was never known.
The maidens danced about it morn and noon,
And learnèd bards of it their ditties made ;
The nimble fairies, by the pale-faced moon,
Watered the root, and kissed her pretty shade.
But, welladay ! the gardener careless grew,
The maids and fairies both were kept away,
And in a drought the caterpillars threw
Themselves upon the bud and every spray.
God shield the stock ! If heaven send no supplies,
The fairest blossom of the garden dies.

SIN.

LORD, with what care hast Thou begirt us round!
Parents first season us; then schoolmasters
Deliver us to laws; they send us bound
To rules of reason, holy messengers,
Pulpits and Sundays, sorrow dogging sin,
Afflictions sorted, anguish of all sizes,
Fine nets and stratagems to catch us in,
Bibles laid open, millions of surprises;
Blessings beforehand, ties of gratefulness,
The sound of glory ringing in our ears;
Without, our shame; within, our consciences;
Angels and grace, eternal hopes and fears.
Yet all these fences and their whole array
One cunning bosom-sin blows quite away.

LOVE'S ANNIVERSARY.

TO THE SUN.

THOU art returned, great light, to that blest hour
In which I first by marriage, sacred power,
Joined with Castara hearts: and as the same
Thy lustre is, as then, so is our flame;
Which had increased, but that by love's decree
'Twas such at first it ne'er could greater be.
But tell me, glorious lamp, in thy survey
Of things below thee, what did not decay
By age to weakness?—I since that have seen
The rose bud forth and fade, the tree grow green
And wither, and the beauty of the field
With winter wrinkled. Even thyself dost yield
Something to time, and to thy grave fall nigher;—
But virtuous love is one sweet endless fire.

O NIGHTINGALE, that on yon bloomy spray
Warbl'st at eve, when all the woods are still,
Thou with fresh hope the lover's heart dost fill,
While the jolly Hours lead on propitious May.
Thy liquid notes that close the eye of day,
First heard before the shallow cuckoo's bill,
Portend success in love. Oh, if Jove's will
Have linkt that amorous power to thy soft lay,
Now timely sing, ere the rude bird of hate
Foretell my hopeless doom, in some grove nigh;
As thou from year to year hast sung too late
For my relief, yet hadst no reason why:
Whether the Muse or Love call thee his mate,
Both them I serve, and of their train am I.

HOW soon hath Time, the subtle thief of youth,
Stoln on his wing my three-and-twentieth year!
My hasting days fly on with full career,
But my late spring no bud or blossom shew'th.
Perhaps my semblance might deceive the truth
That I to manhood am arrived so near;
And inward ripeness doth much less appear,
That some more timely-happy spirits indu'th.
Yet be it less or more, or soon or slow,
It shall be still in strictest measure even,
To that same lot, however mean or high,
Toward which Time leads me, and the will of Heaven.
All is, if I have grace to use it so,
As ever in my great task-Master's eye.

WHEN THE ASSAULT WAS INTENDED TO THE CITY.

CAPTAIN, or Colonel, or Knight in arms,
Whose chance on these defenceless doors may seize,
If deed of honour did thee ever please,
Guard them, and him within protect from harms.
He can requite thee, for he knows the charms
That call fame on such gentle acts as these;
And he can spread thy name o'er lands and seas,
Whatever clime the sun's bright circle warms.
Lift not thy spear against the Muses' bower:
The great Emathian conqueror bid spare
The house of Pindarus, when temple and tower
Went to the ground; and the repeated air
Of sad Electra's poet had the power
To save the Athenian walls from ruin bare.

LADY, that in the prime of earliest youth
Wisely hast shunned the broad way and the green,
And with those few art eminently seen
That labour up the hill of heavenly Truth,
The better part with Mary and with Ruth
Chosen thou hast; and they that overween,
And at thy growing virtues fret their spleen,
No anger find in thee, but pity and ruth.
Thy care is fixt, and zealously attends
To fill thy odorous lamp with deeds of light,
And hope that reaps not shame. Therefore be sure
Thou, when the Bridegroom with his feastful friends
Passes to bliss at the mid-hour of night,
Hast gained thy entrance, Virgin wise and pure.

TO THE LADY MARGARET LEY.

DAUGHTER to that good Earl, once President
Of England's Council and her Treasury,
Who lived in both unstained with gold or fee,
And left them both, more in himself content,
Till the sad breaking of that Parliament
Broke him, as that dishonest victory
At Chæronea, fatal to liberty,
Killed with report that old man eloquent,
Though later born than to have known the days
Wherein your father flourisht, yet by you,
Madam, methinks I see him living yet;
So well your words his noble virtues praise,
That all both judge you to relate them true
And to possess them, honoured Margaret.

ON THE RELIGIOUS MEMORY OF MRS. CATHERINE THOMSON,

MY CHRISTIAN FRIEND, DECEASED 16TH DECEMBER, 1646.

WHEN Faith and Love, which parted from thee never,
Had ripened thy just soul to dwell with God,
Meekly thou didst resign this earthy load
Of death, called life, which us from life doth sever.
Thy works and alms and all thy good endeavour
Stayed not behind, nor in the grave were trod;
But, as Faith pointed with her golden rod,
Followed thee up to joy and bliss for ever.
Love led them on, and Faith, who knew them best,
Thy handmaids, clad them o'er with purple beams
And azure wings, that up they flew so drest,
And speak the truth of thee on glorious themes
Before the Judge; who thenceforth bid thee rest,
And drink thy fill of pure immortal streams.

TO SIR HENRY VANE THE YOUNGER.

VANE, young in years, but in sage counsel old,
Than whom a better senator ne'er held
The helm of Rome, when gowns, not arms, repelled
The fierce Epirot and the African bold,
Whether to settle peace, or to unfold
The drift of hollow states hard to be spelled;
Then to advise how War may best upheld
Move by her two main nerves, iron and gold,
In all her equipage; besides to know
Both spiritual power and civil, what each means,
What severs each, thou hast learned, which few
have done.
The bounds of either sword to thee we owe:
Therefore on thy firm hand Religion leans
In peace, and reckons thee her eldest son.

ON THE LATE MASSACRE IN PIEDMONT.

AVENGE, O Lord, thy slaughtered saints, whose bones
Lie scattered on the Alpine mountains cold;
Even them who kept thy truth so pure of old,
When all our fathers worshipt stocks and stones,
Forget not: in thy book record their groans
Who were thy sheep, and in their ancient fold
Slain by the bloody Piemontese, that rolled
Mother with infant down the rocks. Their moans
The vales redoubled to the hills, and they
To heaven. Their martyred blood and ashes sow
O'er all the Italian fields, where still doth sway
The triple tyrant; that from these may grow
A hundredfold, who, having learnt thy way,
Early may fly the Babylonian woe.

WHEN I consider how my light is spent
Ere half my days in this dark world and wide,
And that one talent, which is death to hide,
Lodged with me useless, though my soul more bent
To serve therewith my Maker, and present
My true account, lest He, returning, chide;
'Doth God exact day-labour, light denied?'
I fondly ask. But Patience, to prevent
That murmur, soon replies: 'God doth not need
Either man's work or his own gifts. Who best
Bear his mild yoke, they serve Him best. His state
Is kingly. Thousands, at his bidding, speed
And post o'er land and ocean without rest;—
They also serve who only stand and wait.'

LAWRENCE, of virtuous father virtuous son,
Now that the fields are dank and ways are mire,
Where shall we sometimes meet, and by the fire
Help waste a sullen day, what may be won
From the hard season gaining? Time will run
On smoother, till Favonius reinspire
The frozen earth, and clothe in fresh attire
The lily and rose, that neither sowed nor spun.
What neat repast shall feast us, light and choice,
Of Attic taste, with wine, whence we may rise
To hear the lute well toucht, or artful voice
Warble immortal notes and Tuscan air?
He who of those delights can judge, and spare
To interpose them oft, is not unwise.

CYRIACK, whose grandsire on the royal bench
Of British Themis, with no mean applause,
Pronounc't, and in his volumes taught, our laws,
Which others at their bar so often wrench,
To-day deep thoughts resolve with me to drench
In mirth that after no repenting draws;
Let Euclid rest and Archimedes pause,
And what the Swede intends, and what the French.
To measure life learn thou betimes, and know
Toward solid good what leads the nearest way;
For other things mild Heaven a time ordains,
And disapproves that care, though wise in show,
That with superfluous burden loads the day,
And, when God sends a cheerful hour, refrains.

CYRIACK, this three-years-day these eyes, though clear,
To outward view, of blemish or of spot,
Bereft of light, their seeing have forgot;
Nor to their idle orbs doth sight appear
Of sun, or moon, or star, throughout the year,
Or man, or woman. Yet I argue not
Against Heaven's hand or will, nor bate a jot
Of heart or hope, but still bear up and steer
Right onward. What supports me, dost thou ask?
The conscience, friend, to have lost them overplied
In Liberty's defence, my noble task,
Of which all Europe rings from side to side.
This thought might lead me through the world's vain mask,
Content, though blind, had I no better guide.

METHOUGHT I saw my late espousèd saint
Brought to me like Alcestis from the grave,
Whom Jove's great son to her glad husband gave,
Rescued from Death by force, though pale and faint.
Mine, as whom washt from spot of child-bed taint
Purification in the old law did save,
And such as yet once more I trust to have
Full sight of her in Heaven without restraint,
Came vested all in white, pure as her mind:
Her face was veiled; yet to my fancied sight
Love, sweetness, goodness, in her person shined
So clear, as in no face with more delight.
But, oh! as to embrace me she inclined,
I waked, she fled, and day brought back my night.

TO RICHARD OWEN CAMBRIDGE.

CAMBRIDGE, with whom, my pilot and my guide,
Pleased I have traversed thy Sabrina's flood,
Both where she foams impetuous, soiled with mud,
And where she peaceful rolls her golden tide;
Never, oh, never let ambition's pride
(Too oft pretexèd with our country's good),
And tinselled pomp, despised when understood,
Or thirst of wealth, thee from her banks divide!
Reflect how calmly, like her infant wave,
Flows the clear current of a private life;
See the wide public stream, by tempests tost,
Of every changing wind the sport or slave,
Soiled with corruption, vexed with party strife,
Covered with wrecks of peace and honour lost.

TO JOHN WILLIAMSON.

WHEN I behold thee, blameless Williamson,
Wrecked like an infant on a savage shore,
While others round on borrowed pinions soar,
My busy fancy calls thy thread misspun;
Till Faith instructs me the deceit to shun,
While thus she speaks: 'Those wings that from the store
Of virtue were not lent, howe'er they bore
In this gross air, will melt when near the sun.
The truly ambitious wait for Nature's time,
Content by certain though by slow degrees
To mount above the reach of vulgar flight;
Nor is that man confined to this low clime
Who but the extremest skirts of glory sees,
And hears celestial echoes with delight.'

ON THE DEATH OF RICHARD WEST.

IN vain to me the smiling mornings shine,
And reddening Phœbus lifts his golden fire ;
The birds in vain their amorous descant join,
Or cheerful fields resume their green attire :
These ears, alas ! for other notes repine,
A different object do these eyes require ;
My lonely anguish melts no heart but mine,
And in my breast the imperfect joys expire.
Yet morning smiles the busy race to cheer,
And new-born pleasure brings to happier men ;
The fields to all their wonted tribute bear,
To warm their little loves the birds complain .
I fruitless mourn to him that cannot hear,
And weep the more because I weep in vain.

ANNIVERSARY.

FEB. 23, 1795.

A PLAINTIVE sonnet flowed from Milton's pen
When Time had stolen his three-and-twentieth year:
Say, shall not I then shed one tuneful tear,
Robbed by the thief of three-score years and ten?
No! for the foes of all life-lengthened men,
Trouble and toil, approach not yet too near;
Reason, meanwhile, and health, and memory dear
Hold unimpaired their weak yet wonted reign:
Still round my sheltered lawn I pleased can stray;
Still trace my sylvan blessings to their spring:
BEING OF BEINGS! yes, that silent lay
Which musing Gratitude delights to sing,
Still to thy sapphire throne shall Faith convey,
And Hope, the cherub of unwearied wing.

WRITTEN IN A BLANK LEAF OF DUGDALE'S 'MONASTICON.'

DEEM not devoid of elegance the sage,
By Fancy's genuine feelings unbeguiled,
Of painful pedantry the poring child,
Who turns of these proud domes the historic page,
Now sunk by Time and Henry's fiercer rage.
Think'st thou the warbling Muses never smiled
On his lone hours? Ingenuous views engage
His thoughts, on themes, unclassic falsely styled,
Intent. While cloistered Piety displays
Her mouldering roll, the piercing eye explores
New manners, and the pomp of elder days,
Whence culls the pensive bard his pictured stores.
Nor rough nor barren are the winding ways
Of hoar Antiquity, but strewn with flowers.

TO THE RIVER LODON.

AH! what a weary race my feet have run,
Since first I trod thy banks with alders crowned,
And thought my way was all through fairy ground,
Beneath thy azure sky and golden sun:
Where first my Muse to lisp her notes begun!
While pensive Memory traces back the round
Which fills the varied interval between;
Much pleasure, more of sorrow, marks the scene.
Sweet native stream! those skies and suns so pure
No more return, to cheer my evening road!
Yet still one joy remains,—that not obscure,
Nor useless, all my vacant days have flowed,
From youth's gay dawn to manhood's prime mature;
Nor with the Muse's laurel unbestowed.

TO MRS UNWIN.

MARY! I want a lyre with other strings,
Such aid from heaven as some have feigned they drew,
An eloquence scarce given to mortals, new
And undebased by praise of meaner things;
That, ere through age or woe I shed my wings,
I may record thy worth with honour due,
In verse as musical as thou art true,
And that immortalizes whom it sings.
But thou hast little need. There is a Book
By seraphs writ with beams of heavenly light,
On which the eyes of God not rarely look,
A chronicle of actions just and bright;—
There all thy deeds, my faithful Mary, shine;
And since thou own'st that praise, I spare thee mine.

DECEMBER MORNING.

I LOVE to rise ere gleams the tardy light,
Winter's pale dawn; and as warm fires illume,
And cheerful tapers shine around the room,
Through misty windows bend my musing sight,
Where, round the dusky lawn, the mansions white,
With shutters closed, peer faintly through the gloom
That slow recedes; while yon grey spires assume,
Rising from their dark pile, an added height
By indistinctness given.—Then to decree
The grateful thoughts to God, ere they unfold
To friendship or the Muse, or seek with glee
Wisdom's rich page. O hours more worth than gold,
By whose blest use we lengthen life, and, free
From drear decays of age, outlive the old!

SHOULD the lone wanderer, fainting on his way,
Rest for a moment of the sultry hours,
And though his path through thorns and roughness lay,
Pluck the wild rose or woodbine's gadding flowers,
Weaving gay wreaths beneath some sheltering tree,
The sense of sorrow he awhile may lose:
So have I sought thy flowers, fair Poesy!
So charmed my way with friendship and the Muse.
But darker now grows life's unhappy day,
Dark with new clouds of evil yet to come;
Her pencil sickening Fancy throws away,
And weary Hope reclines upon the tomb,
And points my wishes to that tranquil shore,
Where the pale spectre Care pursues no more.

TO HOPE.

OEVER skilled to wear the form we love!
To bid the shapes of fear and grief depart;
Come, gentle Hope! with one gay smile remove
The lasting sadness of an aching heart.
Thy voice, benign enchantress! let me hear;
Say that for me some pleasures yet shall bloom,—
That fancy's radiance, friendship's precious tear,
Shall soften, or shall chase, misfortune's gloom.
But come not glowing in the dazzling ray
Which once with dear illusions charmed my eye;
Oh, strew no more, sweet flatterer! on my way
The flowers I fondly thought too bright to die:
Visions less fair will soothe my pensive breast,
That asks not happiness, but longs for rest.

ON ECHO AND SILENCE.

IN eddying course when leaves began to fly,
And Autumn in her lap the store to strew,
As 'mid wild scenes I chanced the Muse to woo,
Through glens untrod and woods that frowned on high,
Two sleeping nymphs with wonder mute I spy!—
And lo, she's gone!—in robe of dark green hue,
'Twas Echo from her sister Silence flew:
For quick the hunter's horn resounded to the sky!
In shade affrighted Silence melts away.
Not so her sister!—hark, for onward still
With far-heard step she takes her listening way,
Bounding from rock to rock, and hill to hill!
Ah, mark the merry maid in mockful play
With thousand mimic tones the laughing forest fill.

COULD then the babes from yon unsheltered cot
Implore thy passing charity in vain?
Too thoughtless youth, what though thy happier lot
Insult their life of poverty and pain!
What though their Maker doomed them thus forlorn
To brook the mockery of the taunting throng,
Beneath the oppressor's iron scourge to mourn,—
To mourn, but not to murmur at his wrong!
Yet when their last late evening shall decline,
Their evening cheerful, though their day distrest,
A hope perhaps more heavenly-bright than thine,
A grace by thee unsought and unpossest,
A faith more fixed, a rapture more divine
Shall gild their passage to eternal rest.

SUPPOSED TO BE WRITTEN AT LEMNOS.

ON this lone isle, whose rugged rocks affright
The cautious pilot, ten revolving years
Great Pæan's son, unwonted erst to tears,
Wept o'er his wound: alike each rolling light
Of heaven he watched, and blamed its lingering flight;
By day the sea-mew screaming round his cave
Drove slumber from his eyes; the chiding wave
And savage howlings chased his dreams by night.
Hope still was his: in each low breeze that sighed
Through his rude grot he heard a coming oar,
In each white cloud a coming sail he spied;
Nor seldom listened to the fancied roar
Of Œta's torrents, or the hoarser tide
That parts famed Trachis from the Euboic shore.

OSTEND:

ON HEARING THE BELLS AT SEA.

HOW sweet the tuneful bells' responsive peal!
As when at opening dawn the fragrant breeze
Touches the trembling sense of pale disease,
So piercing to my heart their force I feel.
And hark! with lessening cadence now they fall,
And now along the white and level tide
They fling their melancholy music wide;
Bidding me many a tender thought recall
Of summer days, and those delightful years
When by my native streams, in life's fair prime,
The mournful magic of their mingling chime
First waked my wondering childhood into tears!
But seeming now, when all those days are o'er,
The sounds of joy once heard and heard no more.

O TIME! who know'st a lenient hand to lay
Softest on sorrow's wound, and slowly thence,
Lulling to sad repose the weary sense,
The faint pang stealest unperceived away;
On thee I rest my only hope at last,
And think, when thou hast dried the bitter tear
That flows in vain o'er all my soul held dear,
I may look back on every sorrow past,
And meet life's peaceful evening with a smile;—
As some lone bird, at day's departing hour,
Sings in the sunbeam, of the transient shower
Forgetful, though its wings are wet the while:—
Yet, ah! how much must that poor heart endure,
Which hopes from thee, and thee alone, a cure!

TO TIME.

YES, gentle Time, thy gradual, healing hand
Hath stolen from Sorrow's grasp the envenomed dart;
Submitting to thy skill, my passive heart
Feels that no grief can thy soft power withstand;
And though my aching breast still heaves the sigh,
Though oft the tear swells silent in mine eye;
Yet the keen pang, the agony is gone;
Sorrow and I shall part; and these faint throes
Are but the remnant of severer woes:
As when the furious tempest is o'erblown,
And when the sky has wept its violence,
The opening heavens will oft let fall a shower,
The poor o'erchargèd boughs still drops dispense,
And still the loaded streams in torrents pour.

TO MY BOOKS ON PARTING WITH THEM.

AS one who, destined from his friends to part,
Regrets his loss, yet hopes again erewhile
To share their converse and enjoy their smile,
And tempers as he may affliction's dart,—
Thus, loved associates! chiefs of elder Art!
Teachers of wisdom! who could once beguile
My tedious hours, and lighten every toil,
I now resign you: nor with fainting heart;
For pass a few short years, or days, or hours,
And happier seasons may their dawn unfold,
And all your sacred fellowship restore;
When, freed from earth, unlimited its powers,
Mind shall with mind direct communion hold,
And kindred spirits meet to part no more.

NUNS fret not at their convent's narrow room;
And hermits are contented with their cells;
And students with their pensive citadels:
Maids at the wheel, the weaver at his loom,
Sit blithe and happy; bees that soar for bloom,
High as the highest Peak of Furness-fells,
Will murmur by the hour in foxglove bells:
In truth, the prison unto which we doom
Ourselves, no prison is: and hence for me,
In sundry moods, 'twas pastime to be bound
Within the Sonnet's scanty plot of ground;
Pleased if some Souls (for such there needs must be)
Who have felt the weight of too much liberty,
Should find brief solace there, as I have found.

ADMONITION.

YES, there is holy pleasure in thine eye!—
The lovely Cottage in the guardian nook
Hath stirred thee deeply; with its own dear brook,
Its own small pasture, almost its own sky!
But covet not the Abode;—forbear to sigh,
As many do, repining while they look;
Intruders—who would tear from Nature's book
This precious leaf, with harsh impiety.
Think what the Home must be if it were thine,
Even thine, though few thy wants!—Roof, window, door,
The very flowers are sacred to the Poor,
The roses to the porch which they entwine:
Yea, all, that now enchants thee, from the day
On which it should be touched, would melt away!

THERE is a little unpretending Rill
Of limpid water, humbler far than aught
That ever among Men or Naiads sought
Notice or name!—It quivers down the hill,
Furrowing its shallow way with dubious will;
Yet to my mind this scanty Stream is brought
Oftener than Ganges or the Nile; a thought
Of private recollection sweet and still!
Months perish with their moons; year treads on year;
But, faithful Emma! thou with me canst say
That, while ten thousand pleasures disappear,
And flies their memory fast almost as they,
The immortal Spirit of one happy day
Lingers beside that Rill, in vision clear.

TO SLEEP.

A FLOCK of sheep that leisurely pass by,
One after one; the sound of rain, and bees
Murmuring; the fall of rivers, winds and seas,
Smooth fields, white sheets of water, and pure sky;—
I've thought of all by turns, and yet do lie
Sleepless; and soon the small birds' melodies
Must hear, first uttered from my orchard trees;
And the first cuckoo's melancholy cry.
Even thus last night, and two nights more, I lay,
And could not win thee, Sleep! by any stealth:
So do not let me wear to-night away:
Without Thee what is all the morning's wealth?
Come, blessèd barrier between day and day,
Dear mother of fresh thoughts and joyous health!

UPON THE SIGHT OF A BEAUTIFUL PICTURE,

PAINTED BY SIR G. H. BEAUMONT, BART.

PRAISED be the Art whose subtle power could stay
Yon cloud, and fix it in that glorious shape ;
Nor would permit the thin smoke to escape,
Nor those bright sunbeams to forsake the day ;
Which stopped that band of travellers on their way,
Ere they were lost within the shady wood ;
And showed the Bark upon the glassy flood
For ever anchored in her sheltering bay.
Soul-soothing Art ! whom Morning, Noon-tide, Even,
Do serve with all their changeful pageantry ;
Thou, with ambition modest yet sublime,
Here, for the sight of mortal man, hast given
To one brief moment caught from fleeting time
The appropriate calm of blest eternity.

COMPOSED UPON WESTMINSTER BRIDGE,

SEPTEMBER 3, 1802.

EARTH has not anything to show more fair:
Dull would he be of soul who could pass by
A sight so touching in its majesty:
This City now doth like a garment wear
The beauty of the morning; silent, bare,
Ships, towers, domes, theatres, and temples lie
Open unto the fields and to the sky;
All bright and glittering in the smokeless air.
Never did sun more beautifully steep
In his first splendour, valley, rock, or hill;
Ne'er saw I, never felt, a calm so deep!
The river glideth at his own sweet will:
Dear God! the very houses seem asleep;
And all that mighty heart is lying still!

IT is a beauteous Evening, calm and free;
The holy time is quiet as a Nun
Breathless with adoration; the broad sun
Is sinking down in its tranquillity;
The gentleness of heaven is on the Sea:
Listen! the mighty Being is awake,
And doth with his eternal motion make
A sound like thunder—everlastingly.
Dear Child! dear Girl! that walkest with me here,
If thou appear untouched by solemn thought,
Thy nature is not therefore less divine:
Thou liest in Abraham's bosom all the year;
And worshipp'st at the Temple's inner shrine,
God being with thee when we know it not.

SURPRISED by joy—impatient as the Wind
I turned to share the transport—Oh! with whom
But Thee, deep-buried in the silent tomb,
That spot which no vicissitude can find?
Love, faithful love, recalled thee to my mind—
But how could I forget thee? Through what power,
Even for the least division of an hour,
Have I been so beguiled as to be blind
To my most grievous loss!—That thought's return
Was the worst pang that sorrow ever bore,
Save one, one only, when I stood forlorn,
Knowing my heart's best treasure was no more;
That neither present time, nor years unborn
Could to my sight that heavenly face restore.

COMPOSED AT NEIDPATH CASTLE.

DEGENERATE Douglas! oh, the unworthy Lord!
Whom mere despite of heart could so far please,
And love of havoc (for with such disease
Fame taxes him), that he could send forth word
To level with the dust a noble horde,
A brotherhood of venerable Trees,
Leaving an ancient dome, and towers like these,
Beggared and outraged!—Many hearts deplored
The fate of those old Trees; and oft with pain
The traveller, at this day, will stop and gaze
On wrongs, which Nature scarcely seems to heed:
For sheltered places, bosoms, nooks, and bays,
And the pure mountains, and the gentle Tweed,
And the green silent pastures, yet remain.

THE world is too much with us; late and soon,
Getting and spending, we lay waste our powers:
Little we see in Nature that is ours;
We have given our hearts away, a sordid boon!
This Sea that bares her bosom to the moon,
The winds that will be howling at all hours
And are up-gathered now like sleeping flowers;
For this, for every thing, we are out of tune;
It moves us not.—Great God! I'd rather be
A Pagan suckled in a creed outworn;
So might I, standing on this pleasant lea,
Have glimpses that would make me less forlorn;
Have sight of Proteus rising from the sea;
Or hear old Triton blow his wreathèd horn.

TO B. R. HAYDON.

HIGH is our calling, Friend !—Creative Art
(Whether the instrument of words she use,
Or pencil pregnant with ethereal hues,)
Demands the service of a mind and heart,
Though sensitive, yet, in their weakest part,
Heroically fashioned—to infuse
Faith in the whispers of the lonely Muse,
While the whole world seems adverse to desert.
And oh ! when Nature sinks, as oft she may,
Through long-lived pressure of obscure distress,
Still to be strenuous for the bright reward,
And in the soul admit of no decay,
Brook no continuance of weak-mindedness—
Great is the glory, for the strife is hard !

TO LADY FITZGERALD,

IN HER SEVENTIETH YEAR.

SUCH age how beautiful! O Lady bright,
Whose mortal lineaments seem all refined
By favouring Nature and a saintly Mind
To something purer and more exquisite
Than flesh and blood; whene'er thou meet'st my sight,
When I behold thy blanched unwithered cheek,
Thy temples fringed with locks of gleaming white,
And head that droops because the soul is meek,
Thee with the welcome Snowdrop I compare;
That child of winter, prompting thoughts that climb
From desolation toward the genial prime;
Or with the Moon conquering earth's misty air,
And filling more and more with crystal light
As pensive Evening deepens into night.

WHY art thou silent? Is thy love a plant
Of such weak fibre that the treacherous air
Of absence withers what was once so fair?
Is there no debt to pay, no boon to grant?
Yet have my thoughts for thee been vigilant—
Bound to thy service with unceasing care,
The mind's least generous wish a mendicant
For nought but what thy happiness could spare.
Speak!—though this soft warm heart, once free to hold
A thousand tender pleasures, thine and mine,
Be left more desolate, more dreary cold
Than a forsaken bird's-nest filled with snow
'Mid its own bush of leafless eglantine—
Speak, that my torturing doubts their end may know!

PERSONAL TALK.

I.

I AM not One who much or oft delight
To season my fireside with personal talk,—
Of friends, who live within an easy walk,
Or neighbours, daily, weekly, in my sight:
And, for my chance-acquaintance, ladies bright,
Sons, mothers, maidens withering on the stalk,
These all wear out of me, like Forms with chalk
Painted on rich men's floors for one feast-night.
Better than such discourse doth silence long,
Long, barren silence, square with my desire;
To sit without emotion, hope, or aim,
In the loved presence of my cottage fire,
And listen to the flapping of the flame,
Or kettle whispering its faint undersong.

PERSONAL TALK.

II.

WINGS have we,—and as far as we can go
We may find pleasure: wilderness and wood,
Blank ocean and mere sky, support that mood
Which with the lofty sanctifies the low.
Dreams, books, are each a world; and books, we know,
Are a substantial world, both pure and good:
Round these, with tendrils strong as flesh and blood,
Our pastime and our happiness will grow.
There find I personal themes, a plenteous store,
Matter wherein right voluble I am,
To which I listen with a ready ear;
Two shall be named, pre-eminently dear,—
The gentle Lady married to the Moor;
And heavenly Una with her milk-white Lamb.

PERSONAL TALK.

III.

NOR can I not believe but that hereby
Great gains are mine; for thus I live remote
From evil-speaking; rancour, never sought,
Comes to me not; malignant truth, or lie.
Hence have I genial seasons, hence have I
Smooth passions, smooth discourse, and joyous thought:
And thus from day to day my little boat
Rocks in its harbour, lodging peaceably.
Blessings be with them—and eternal praise,
Who gave us nobler loves, and nobler cares—
The Poets, who on earth have made us heirs
Of truth and pure delight by heavenly lays!
Oh! might my name be numbered among theirs,
Then gladly would I end my mortal days.

SCORN not the Sonnet; Critic, you have frowned,
Mindless of its just honours: with this key
Shakspeare unlocked his heart; the melody
Of this small lute gave ease to Petrarch's wound;
A thousand times this pipe did Tasso sound;
With it Camöens soothed an exile's grief;
The Sonnet glittered a gay myrtle leaf
Amid the cypress with which Dante crowned
His visionary brow; a glow-worm lamp
It cheered mild Spenser, called from Faery-land
To struggle through dark ways; and when a damp
Fell round the path of Milton, in his hand
The Thing became a trumpet, whence he blew
Soul-animating strains—alas, too few!

ON THE EXTINCTION OF THE VENETIAN REPUBLIC.

ONCE did She hold the gorgeous East in fee,
And was the safeguard of the West: the worth
Of Venice did not fall below her birth,
Venice, the eldest Child of Liberty.
She was a maiden City, bright and free;
No guile seduced, no force could violate;
And when she took unto herself a Mate,
She must espouse the everlasting Sea.
And what if she had seen those glories fade,
Those titles vanish, and that strength decay;
Yet shall some tribute of regret be paid
When her long life hath reached its final day:
Men are we, and must grieve when even the Shade
Of that which once was great is passed away.

TO TOUSSAINT L'OUVERTURE.

TOUSSAINT, the most unhappy man of men!
Whether the whistling Rustic tend his plough
Within thy hearing, or thy head be now
Pillowed in some deep dungeon's earless den;—
O miserable Chieftain! where and when
Wilt thou find patience? Yet die not; do thou
Wear rather in thy bonds a cheerful brow:
Though fallen thyself, never to rise again,
Live, and take comfort. Thou hast left behind
Powers that will work for thee; air, earth, and skies;
There's not a breathing of the common wind
That will forget thee; thou hast great allies;
Thy friends are exultations, agonies,
And love, and man's unconquerable mind.

THOUGHT OF A BRITON ON THE SUBJUGATION OF SWITZERLAND.

TWO Voices are there; one is of the Sea,
One of the Mountains; each a mighty Voice:
In both from age to age thou didst rejoice,
They were thy chosen music, Liberty!
There came a Tyrant, and with holy glee
Thou fought'st against him; but hast vainly striven:
Thou from thy Alpine holds at length art driven
Where not a torrent murmurs heard by thee.
Of one deep bliss thine ear hath been bereft:
Then cleave, O cleave to that which still is left;
For, high-souled Maid, what sorrow would it be
That Mountain floods should thunder as before,
And Ocean bellow from his rocky shore,
And neither awful Voice be heard by thee!

WRITTEN IN LONDON, SEPTEMBER, 1802.

O FRIEND! I know not which way I must look
For comfort, being, as I am, opprest,
To think that now our life is only drest
For show; mean handiwork of craftsman, cook,
Or groom!—We must run glittering like a brook
In the open sunshine, or we are unblest:
The wealthiest man among us is the best:
No grandeur now in nature or in book
Delights us. Rapine, avarice, expense,
This is idolatry; and these we adore:
Plain living and high thinking are no more:
The homely beauty of the good old cause
Is gone; our peace, our fearful innocence,
And pure religion breathing household laws.

LONDON, 1802.

MILTON! thou shouldst be living at this hour:
England hath need of thee: she is a fen
Of stagnant waters: altar, sword, and pen,
Fireside, the heroic wealth of hall and bower,
Have forfeited their ancient English dower
Of inward happiness. We are selfish men;
Oh! raise us up, return to us again;
And give us manners, virtue, freedom, power.
Thy soul was like a Star, and dwelt apart:
Thou hadst a voice whose sound was like the sea:
Pure as the naked heavens, majestic, free,
So didst thou travel on life's common way,
In cheerful godliness; and yet thy heart
The lowliest duties on herself did lay.

IT is not to be thought of that the Flood
Of British freedom, which, to the open sea
Of the world's praise, from dark antiquity
Hath flowed, "with pomp of waters, unwithstood,"
Roused though it be full often to a mood
Which spurns the check of salutary bands,
That this most famous Stream in bogs and sands
Should perish; and to evil and to good
Be lost for ever. In our halls is hung
Armoury of the invincible Knights of old:
We must be free or die, who speak the tongue
That Shakspeare spake; the faith and morals hold
Which Milton held.—In every thing we are sprung
Of Earth's first blood, have titles manifold.

WHEN I have borne in memory what has tamed
Great Nations, how ennobling thoughts depart
When men change swords for ledgers, and desert
The student's bower for gold, some fears unnamed
I had, my Country!—am I to be blamed?
Now, when I think of thee, and what thou art,
Verily, in the bottom of my heart,
Of those unfilial fears I am ashamed.
For dearly must we prize thee; we who find
In thee a bulwark for the cause of men;
And I by my affection was beguiled:
What wonder if a Poet now and then,
Among the many movements of his mind,
Felt for thee as a lover or a child!

BRAVE Schill! by death delivered, take thy flight
From Prussia's timid region. Go, and rest
With heroes, 'mid the islands of the Blest,
Or in the fields of empyrean light.
A meteor wert thou crossing a dark night:
Yet shall thy name, conspicuous and sublime,
Stand in the spacious firmament of time,
Fixed as a star: such glory is thy right.
Alas! it may not be: for earthly fame
Is Fortune's frail dependant; yet there lives
A Judge, who, as man claims by merit, gives;
To whose all-pondering mind a noble aim,
Faithfully kept, is as a noble deed;
In whose pure sight all virtue doth succeed.

ON THE DEPARTURE OF SIR WALTER SCOTT FROM ABBOTSFORD, FOR NAPLES.

A TROUBLE, not of clouds, or weeping rain,
Nor of the setting sun's pathetic light
Engendered, hangs o'er Eildon's triple height:
Spirits of Power, assembled there, complain
For kindred Power departing from their sight;
While Tweed, best pleased in chanting a blithe strain,
Saddens his voice again, and yet again.
Lift up your hearts, ye Mourners! for the might,
Of the whole world's good wishes with him goes;
Blessings and prayers, in nobler retinue
Than sceptred king or laurelled conqueror knows,
Follow this wondrous Potentate. Be true,
Ye winds of ocean, and the midland sea,
Wafting your Charge to soft Parthenope!

THE TROSSACHS.

THERE'S not a nook within this solemn Pass,
But were an apt confessional for One
Taught by his summer spent, his autumn gone,
That Life is but a tale of morning grass
Withered at eve. From scenes of art which chase
That thought away, turn, and with watchful eyes
Feed it 'mid Nature's old felicities,
Rocks, rivers, and smooth lakes more clear than glass
Untouched, unbreathed upon. Thrice happy quest,
If from a golden perch of aspen spray
(October's workmanship to rival May)
The pensive warbler of the ruddy breast
That moral sweeten by a heaven-taught lay,
Lulling the year, with all its cares, to rest!

MARY QUEEN OF SCOTS.

(LANDING AT THE MOUTH OF THE DERWENT, WORKINGTON.)

DEAR to the Loves, and to the Graces vowed,
The Queen drew back the wimple that she wore;
And to the throng, that on the Cumbrian shore
Her landing hailed, how touchingly she bowed!
And like a Star (that, from a heavy cloud
Of pine-tree foliage poised in air, forth darts,
When a soft summer gale at evening parts
The gloom that did its loveliness enshroud)
She smiled; but Time, the old Saturnian seer,
Sighed on the wing as her foot pressed the strand,
With step prelusive to a long array
Of woes and degradations hand in hand—
Weeping captivity, and shuddering fear
Stilled by the ensanguined block of Fotheringay!

MOST sweet it is with unuplifted eyes
To pace the ground, if path be there or none,
While a fair region round the traveller lies
Which he forbears again to look upon;
Pleased rather with some soft ideal scene,
The work of Fancy, or some happy tone
Of meditation, slipping in between
The beauty coming and the beauty gone.
If Thought and Love desert us, from that day
Let us break off all commerce with the Muse:
With Thought and Love companions of our way,
Whate'er the senses take or may refuse,
The Mind's internal heaven shall shed her dews
Of inspiration on the humblest lay.

AFTER-THOUGHT.

I THOUGHT of Thee, my partner and my guide,
As being past away.—Vain sympathies!
For backward, Duddon! as I cast my eyes,
I see what was, and is, and will abide;
Still glides the Stream, and shall for ever glide;
The Form remains, the Function never dies;
While we, the brave, the mighty, and the wise,
We Men, who in our morn of youth defied
The elements, must vanish;—be it so!
Enough, if something from our hands have power
To live, and act, and serve the future hour;
And if, as toward the silent tomb we go,
Through love, through hope, and faith's transcendent dower,
We feel that we are greater than we know.

MUTABILITY.

FROM low to high doth dissolution climb,
And sink from high to low, along a scale
Of awful notes, whose concord shall not fail;
A musical but melancholy chime,
Which they can hear who meddle not with crime,
Nor avarice, nor over-anxious care.
Truth fails not; but her outward forms that bear
The longest date do melt like frosty rime,
That in the morning whitened hill and plain
And is no more; drop like the tower sublime
Of yesterday, which royally did wear
His crown of weeds, but could not even sustain
Some casual shout that broke the silent air,
Or the unimaginable touch of Time.

THE VIRGIN.

MOTHER! whose virgin bosom was uncrost
With the least shade of thought to sin allied;
Woman! above all women glorified,
Our tainted nature's solitary boast;
Purer than foam on central ocean tost;
Brighter than eastern skies at daybreak strewn
With fancied roses, than the unblemished moon
Before her wane begins on heaven's blue coast;
Thy Image falls to earth. Yet some, I ween,
Not unforgiven the suppliant knee might bend,
As to a visible Power, in which did blend
All that was mixed and reconciled in Thee
Of mother's love with maiden purity,
Of high with low, celestial with terrene!

INSIDE OF KING'S COLLEGE CHAPEL, CAMBRIDGE.

TAX not the royal Saint with vain expense,
With ill-matched aims the Architect who planned—
Albeit labouring for a scanty band
Of white-robed Scholars only—this immense
And glorious Work of fine intelligence!
Give all thou canst; high Heaven rejects the lore
Of nicely-calculated less or more;
So deemed the man who fashioned for the sense
These lofty pillars, spread that branching roof
Self-poised, and scooped into ten thousand cells,
Where light and shade repose, where music dwells
Lingering—and wandering on as loth to die;
Like thoughts whose very sweetness yieldeth proof
That they were born for immortality.

EJACULATION.

GLORY to God! and to the Power who came
In filial duty, clothed with love divine,
That made his human tabernacle shine
Like Ocean burning with purpureal flame;
Or like the Alpine Mount, that takes its name
From roseate hues, far kenned at morn and even,
In hours of peace, or when the storm is driven
Along the nether region's rugged frame!
Earth prompts—Heaven urges; let us seek the light,
Studious of that pure intercourse begun
When first our infant brows their lustre won;
So, like the Mountain, may we grow more bright
From unimpeded commerce with the Sun,
At the approach of all-involving night.

COMPOSED ON A MAY MORNING, 1838.

LIFE with yon Lambs, like day, is just begun,
Yet Nature seems to them a heavenly guide.
Does joy approach? they meet the coming tide;
And sullenness avoid, as now they shun
Pale twilight's lingering glooms,—and in the sun
Couch near their dams, with quiet satisfied;
Or gambol—each with his shadow at his side,
Varying its shape wherever he may run.
As they from turf yet hoar with sleepy dew
All turn, and court the shining and the green,
Where herbs look up, and opening flowers are seen;
Why to God's goodness cannot We be true,
And so, his gifts and promises between,
Feed to the last on pleasures ever new?

WANSFELL! this Household has a favoured lot,
Living with liberty on thee to gaze,
To watch while Morn first crowns thee with her rays,
Or when along thy breast serenely float
Evening's angelic clouds. Yet ne'er a note
Hath sounded (shame upon the Bard!) thy praise
For all that thou, as if from heaven, hast brought
Of glory lavished on our quiet days.
Bountiful Son of Earth! when we are gone
From every object dear to mortal sight,
As soon we shall be, may these words attest
How oft, to elevate our spirits, shone
Thy visionary majesties of light,
How in thy pensive glooms our hearts found rest.

TO THE RIVER OTTER.

DEAR native brook! wild streamlet of the West!
How many various-fated years have passed,
What happy, and what mournful hours, since last
I skimmed the smooth thin stone along thy breast,
Numbering its light leaps! Yet so deep imprest
Sink the sweet scenes of childhood, that mine eyes
I never shut amid the sunny ray,
But straight with all their tints thy waters rise,
Thy crossing plank, thy marge with willows gray,
And bedded sand, that veined with various dyes,
Gleamed through thy bright transparence. On my way,
Visions of childhood! oft have ye beguiled
Lone manhood's cares, yet waking fondest sighs—
Ah! that once more I were a careless child.

TO NATURE

IT may indeed be phantasy when I
Essay to draw from all created things
Deep, heartfelt, inward joy that closely clings;
And trace in leaves and flowers that round me lie
Lessons of love and earnest piety.
So let it be; and if the wide world rings
In mock of this belief, to me it brings
Nor fear, nor grief, nor vain perplexity.
So will I build my altar in the fields,
And the blue sky my fretted dome shall be,
And the sweet fragrance that the wild flower yields
Shall be the incense I will yield to Thee,
Thee only God! and Thou shalt not despise
Even me, the priest of this poor sacrifice.

FANCY IN NUBIBUS:

OR THE POET IN THE CLOUDS.

O IT is pleasant, with a heart at ease,
Just after sunset, or by moonlight skies,
To make the shifting clouds be what you please,
Or let the easily-persuaded eyes
Own each quaint likeness issuing from the mould
Of a friend's fancy; or, with head bent low
And cheek aslant, see rivers flow of gold
'Twixt crimson banks; and then, a traveller, go
From mount to mount through Cloudland, gorgeous land!
Or listening to the tide, with closèd sight,
Be that blind bard who, on the Chian strand
By those deep sounds possessed with inward light,
Beheld the Iliad and the Odyssee
Rise to the swelling of the voiceful sea.

WORK.

WHO first invented Work, and bound the free
And holyday-rejoicing spirit down
To the ever-haunting importunity
Of business in the green fields, and the town—
To plough, loom, anvil, spade—and oh! most sad,
To that dry drudgery at the desk's dead wood?
Who but the Being unblest, alien from good,
Sabbathless Satan! he who his unglad
Task ever plies 'mid rotatory burnings,
That round and round incalculably reel—
For wrath divine hath made him like a wheel—
In that red realm from which are no returnings:
Where toiling, and turmoiling, ever and aye
He, and his thoughts, keep pensive working-day.

LEISURE.

THEY talk of Time, and of Time's galling yoke,
That like a millstone on man's mind doth press,
Which only works and business can redress:
Of divine Leisure such foul lies are spoke,
Wounding her fair gifts with calumnious stroke;
But might I, fed with silent meditation,
Assoilèd live from that fiend Occupation—
Improbus Labor, which my spirits hath broke—
I'd drink of Time's rich cup, and never surfeit;
Fling in more days than went to make the gem
That crowned the white top of Methusalem;
Yea on my weak neck take, and never forfeit,
Like Atlas bearing up the dainty sky,
The heaven-sweet burthen of eternity.

Deus nobis hæc otia fecit.

O LIFT with reverent hand that tarnished flower,
That shrines beneath her modest canopy
Memorials dear to Romish piety,—
Dim specks, rude shapes, of Saints! in fervent hour
The work perchance of some meek devotee
Who, poor in worldly treasures to set forth
The sanctities she worshipped to their worth,
In this imperfect tracery might see
Hints, that all Heaven did to her sense reveal.
Cheap gifts best fit poor givers. We are told
Of the lone mite, the cup of water cold,
That in their way approved the offerer's zeal.
True Love shows costliest where the means are scant;
And, in her reckoning, they *abound* who *want*.

TO A BIRD THAT HAUNTED THE WATERS

OF LAKEN, IN THE WINTER.

O MELANCHOLY bird !—a winter's day
Thou standest by the margin of the pool,
And, taught by God, dost thy whole being school
To patience, which all evil can allay;
God has appointed thee the fish thy prey;
And given thyself a lesson to the fool
Unthrifty, to submit to moral rule,
And his unthinking course by thee to weigh.
There need not schools, nor the professor's chair,
Though these be good, true wisdom to impart;
He who has not enough for these to spare
Of time or gold, may yet amend his heart,
And teach his soul by brooks and rivers fair:
Nature is always wise in every part.

NIGHT AND DEATH.

MYSTERIOUS Night! when our first parent knew
Thee from report divine, and heard thy name,
Did he not tremble for this lovely frame,
This glorious canopy of light and blue?
Yet 'neath a curtain of translucent dew,
Bathed in the rays of the great setting flame,
Hesperus with the host of heaven came,
And lo! creation widened in man's view.
Who could have thought such darkness lay concealed
Within thy beams, O Sun! or who could find,
Whilst fly and leaf and insect stood revealed,
That to such countless orbs thou mad'st us blind!
Why do we then shun Death with anxious strife?
If Light can thus deceive, wherefore not Life?

TO THE HARVEST MOON.

AGAIN thou reignest in thy golden hall,
Rejoicing in thy sway, fair queen of night!
The ruddy reapers hail thee with delight:
Theirs is the harvest, theirs the joyous call
For tasks well ended ere the season's fall.
Sweet orb, thou smilest from thy starry height;
But whilst on them thy beams are shedding bright,
To me thou com'st o'ershadowed with a pall:
To me alone the year hath fruitless flown;
Earth hath fulfilled her trust through all her lands,
The good man gathereth now where he had sown
And the Great Master in his vineyard stands;
But I, as if my task were all unknown,
Come to his gates, alas! with empty hands.

TO THE GRASSHOPPER AND THE CRICKET.

GREEN little vaulter in the sunny grass,
Catching your heart up at the feel of June,
Sole voice that's heard amidst the lazy noon,
When even the bees lag at the summoning brass;
And you, warm little housekeeper, who class
With those who think the candles come too soon,
Loving the fire, and with your tricksome tune
Nick the glad silent moments as they pass;
Oh sweet and tiny cousins, that belong,
One to the fields, the other to the hearth,
Both have your sunshine; both though small are strong
At your clear hearts; and both were sent on earth
To sing in thoughtful ears this natural song:
In doors and out, summer and winter, Mirth.

THE NILE.

IT flows through old hushed Ægypt and its sands,
Like some grave mighty thought threading a dream
And times and things, as in that vision, seem
Keeping along it their eternal stands,—
Caves, pillars, pyramids, the shepherd bands
That roamed through the young world, the glory extreme
Of high Sesostris, and that southern beam,
The laughing queen that caught the world's great hands.
Then comes a mightier silence, stern and strong,
As of a world left empty of its throng,
And the void weighs on us; and then we wake,
And hear the fruitful stream lapsing along
'Twixt villages, and think how we shall take
Our own calm journey on for human sake.

OZYMANDIAS.

I MET a traveller from an antique land
Who said: Two vast and trunkless legs of stone
Stand in the desert. Near them, on the sand,
Half sunk, a shattered visage lies, whose frown
And wrinkled lip and sneer of cold command
Tell that its sculptor well those passions read
Which yet survive, stamped on these lifeless things,
The hand that mocked them and the heart that fed;
And on the pedestal these words appear:
'My name is Ozymandias, king of kings:
Look on my works, ye Mighty, and despair!'
Nothing beside remains. Round the decay
Of that colossal wreck, boundless and bare
The lone and level sands stretch far away.

POLITICAL GREATNESS.

NOR happiness, nor majesty, nor fame,
Nor peace, nor strength, nor skill in arms or arts,
Shepherd those herds whom tyranny makes tame;
Verse echoes not one beating of their hearts,
History is but the shadow of their shame;
Art veils her glass, or from the pageant starts,
As to oblivion their blind millions fleet,
Staining that Heaven with obscene imagery
Of their own likeness. What are numbers knit
By force or custom? Man who man would be,
Must rule the empire of himself; in it
Must be supreme, establishing his throne
On vanquished will, quelling the anarchy
Of hopes and fears, being himself alone.

ON CHILLON.

ETERNAL Spirit of the chainless Mind!
Brightest in dungeons, Liberty, thou art—
For there thy habitation is the heart—
The heart which love of thee alone can bind;
And when thy sons to fetters are consigned,
To fetters, and the damp vault's dayless gloom,
Their country conquers with their martyrdom,
And Freedom's fame finds wings on every wind.
Chillon! thy prison is a holy place,
And thy sad floor an altar, for 'twas trod,
Until his very steps have left a trace
Worn as if thy cold pavement were a sod,
By Bonnivard! May none those marks efface!
For they appeal from tyranny to God.

IS this the spot where Rome's eternal foe
Into his snares the mighty legions drew,
Whence from the carnage, spiritless and few,
A remnant scarcely reached her gates of woe?
Is this the stream, thus gliding soft and slow,
That, from the gushing wounds of thousands, grew
So fierce a flood, that waves of crimson hue
Rushed on the bosom of the lake below?
The mountains that gave back the battle-cry
Are silent now; perchance yon hillocks green
Mark where the bones of those old warriors lie.
Heaven never gladdened a more peaceful scene;
Never left softer breeze a fairer sky
To sport upon thy waters, Thrasymene!

THE PASSION-FLOWER.

ART thou a type of beauty, or of power,
Of sweet enjoyment, or disastrous sin?
For each thy name denoteth, Passion-flower!
O no! thy pure corolla's depth within
We trace a holier symbol; yea, a sign
'Twixt God and man; a record of that hour
When the expiatory act divine
Cancelled that curse which was our mortal dower.
It is the Cross! Never hath Psalmist's tongue
Fitlier of hope to human frailty sung
Than this mute teacher in a floret's breast—
A star of guidance the wild woods among,
A page with more than lettered lore imprest,
A beacon to the havens of the blest.

I WILL not praise the often-flattered rose,
Or, virgin-like, with blushing charms half seen,
Or when, in dazzling splendour, like a queen,
All her magnificence of state she shows;
No, nor that nun-like lily which but blows
Beneath the valley's cool and shady screen;
Nor yet the sun-flower, that with warrior mien
Still eyes the orb of glory where it glows;
But thou, neglected Wall-flower! to my breast
And Muse art dearest, wildest, sweetest flower!
To whom alone the privilege is given
Proudly to root thyself above the rest,
As Genius does, and from thy rocky tower
Lend fragrance to the purest breath of heaven.

IMAGINATION.

OH, for that wingèd steed, Bellerophon!
That Pallas gave thee in her infinite grace
And love for innocence, when thou didst face
The treble-shaped Chimæra. But he is gone
That struck the sparkling stream from Helicon;
And never hath one risen in his place,
Stamped with the features of that mighty race.
Yet wherefore grieve I—seeing how easily
The plumèd spirit may its journey take
Through yon blue regions of the middle air,
And note all things below that own a grace:
Mountain, and cataract, and silent lake;
And wander in the fields of Poesy,
Where avarice never comes, and seldom care!

THE SEA—IN CALM.

LOOK what immortal floods the sunset pours
Upon us!—Mark how still (as though in dreams
Bound) the once wild and terrible Ocean seems!
How silent are the winds! No billow roars;
But all is tranquil as Elysian shores.
The silver margin which aye runneth round
The moon-enchanted sea hath here no sound:
Even Echo speaks not on these radiant moors.
What! is the giant of the ocean dead,
Whose strength was all unmatched beneath the sun?
No: he reposes. Now his toils are done,
More quiet than the babbling brooks is he.
So mightiest powers by deepest calms are fed,
And sleep, how oft, in things that gentlest be!

WHEN I behold yon arch magnificent
Spanning the gorgeous West, the autumnal bed
Where the great sun now hides his weary head,
With here and there a purple isle, that rent
From that huge cloud, their solid continent,
Seem floating in a sea of golden light,
A fire is kindled in my musing sprite,
And Fancy whispers: Such the glories lent
To this our mortal life; most glowing fair,
But built on clouds, and melting while we gaze.
Yet since those shadowy lights sure witness bear
Of One not seen, the undying Sun and Source
Of good and fair, who wisely them surveys
Will use them well to cheer his heavenward course.

AT HOOKER'S TOMB.

THE grey-eyed Morn was saddened with a shower,
A silent shower, that trickled down so still
Scarce drooped beneath its weight the tenderest flower,
Scarce could you trace it on the twinkling rill,
Or moss-stone bathed in dew. It was an hour
Most meet for prayer beside thy lowly grave,
Most for thanksgiving meet, that Heaven such power
To thy serene and humble spirit gave.
'Who sow good seed with tears shall reap in joy.'
So thought I as I watched the gracious rain,
And deemed it like that silent sad employ
Whence sprung thy glory's harvest, to remain
For ever. God hath sworn to lift on high
Who sinks himself by true humility.

CARELESS RAMBLES.

I LOVE to wander at my idle will
In summer's joyous prime about the fields,
To kneel when thirsty at the little rill,
And sip the draught its pebbly bottom yields;
And where the maple bush its fountain shields,
To lie, and rest a sultry hour away,
Cropping the swelling peascod from the land;
Or 'mid the sheltering woodland-walks to stray,
Where oaks for aye o'er their old shadows stand;
'Neath whose dark foliage, with a welcome hand,
I pluck the luscious strawberry, ripe and red
As Beauty's lips;—and in my fancy's dreams,
As 'mid the velvet moss I musing tread,
Feel Life as lovely as her picture seems.

FIRST SIGHT OF SPRING.

THE hazel-blooms, in threads of crimson hue,
Peep through the swelling buds, foretelling Spring,
Ere yet a white-thorn leaf appears in view,
Or March finds throstles pleased enough to sing.
To the old touchwood tree woodpeckers cling
A moment, and their harsh-toned notes renew;
In happier mood, the stockdove claps his wing;
The squirrel sputters up the powdered oak,
With tail cocked o'er his head, and ears erect,
Startled to hear the woodman's understroke;
And with the courage which his fears collect,
He hisses fierce half malice and half glee,
Leaping from branch to branch about the tree,
In winter's foliage, moss and lichens, deckt.

THE THRUSH'S NEST.

WITHIN a thick and spreading hawthorn bush,
That overhung a molehill large and round,
I heard from morn to morn a merry thrush
Sing hymns to sunrise, and I drank the sound
With joy; and, often an intruding guest,
I watched her secret toils from day to day,—
How true she warped the moss to form a nest,
And modelled it within with wood and clay;
And by-and-by, like heath-bells gilt with dew,
There lay her shining eggs, as bright as flowers,
Ink-spotted-over shells of greeny blue;
And there I witnessed, in the sunny hours,
A brood of nature's minstrels chirp and fly,
Glad as that sunshine and the laughing sky,

THE LAST OF APRIL.

OLD April wanes, and her last dewy morn
Her death-bed steeps in tears; to hail the May
New blooming blossoms 'neath the sun are born,
And all poor April's charms are swept away.
The early primrose, peeping once so gay,
Is now choked up with many a mounting weed,
And the poor violet we once admired
Creeps in the grass unsought for; flowers succeed,
Gaudy and new, and more to be desired,
And of the old the schoolboy seemeth tired.
So with us all, poor April, as with thee!
Each hath his day;—the future brings my fears:
Friends may grow weary, new flowers rising be,
And my last end, like thine, be steeped in tears.

THE LILIES OF THE FIELD.

'CONSIDER THE LILIES OF THE FIELD.'

FLOWERS! when the Saviour's calm, benignant eye
Fell on your gentle beauty; when from you
That heavenly lesson for all hearts He drew,
Eternal, universal, as the sky,—
Then in the bosom of your purity
A voice He set as in a temple-shrine,
That life's quick travellers ne'er might pass you by
Unwarned of that sweet oracle divine.
And though too oft its low, celestial sound
By the harsh notes of work-day care is drowned,
And the loud steps of vain, unlistening haste,
Yet the great ocean hath no tone of power
Mightier to reach the soul in thought's hushed hour,
Than yours, ye Lilies! chosen thus and graced.

FLIGHT OF THE SPIRIT.

WHITHER, oh! whither wilt thou wing thy way?
What solemn region first upon thy sight
Shall break, unveiled for terror or delight?
What hosts, magnificent in dread array,
My spirit! when thy prison-house of clay
After long strife is rent? Fond, fruitless quest!
The unfledged bird, within his narrow nest,
Sees but a few green branches o'er him play,
And through their parting leaves, by fits revealed,
A glimpse of summer sky; nor knows the field
Wherein his dormant powers must yet be tried.
Thou art that bird!—of what beyond thee lies
Far in the untracked, immeasurable skies
Knowing but this—that thou shalt find thy Guide!

SABBATH SONNET.

HOW many blessèd groups this hour are bending,
Through England's primrose meadow-paths, their way
Towards spire and tower, 'midst shadowy elms ascending,
Whence the sweet chimes proclaim the hallowed day!
The halls from old heroic ages gray
Pour their fair children forth; and hamlets low,
With whose thick orchard-blooms the soft winds play,
Send out their inmates in a happy flow,
Like a freed vernal stream. I may not tread
With them those pathways, to the feverish bed
Of sickness bound; yet, O my God! I bless
Thy mercy, that with Sabbath peace hath filled
My chastened heart, and all its throbbings stilled
To one deep calm of lowliest thankfulness.

ON FIRST LOOKING INTO CHAPMAN'S HOMER.

MUCH have I travelled in the realms of gold,
And many goodly states and kingdoms seen;
Round many western islands have I been
Which bards in fealty to Apollo hold.
Oft of one wide expanse had I been told
That deep-browed Homer ruled as his demesne:
Yet did I never breathe its pure serene
Till I heard Chapman speak out loud and bold:
Then felt I like some watcher of the skies
When a new planet swims into his ken;
Or like stout Cortez, when with eagle eyes
He stared at the Pacific—and all his men
Looked at each other with a wild surmise—
Silent, upon a peak in Darien.

ON THE GRASSHOPPER AND CRICKET.

THE poetry of earth is never dead:
When all the birds are faint with the hot sun,
And hide in cooling trees, a voice will run
From hedge to hedge about the new-mown mead;
That is the grasshopper's—he takes the lead
In summer luxury,—he has never done
With his delights; for when tired out with fun,
He rests at ease beneath some pleasant weed.
The poetry of earth is ceasing never:
On a lone winter evening, when the frost
Has wrought a silence, from the stove there shrills
The cricket's song, in warmth increasing ever,
And seems to one in drowsiness half lost,
The grasshopper's among some grassy hills.

THE HUMAN SEASONS.

FOUR seasons fill the measure of the year;
There are four seasons in the mind of man:
He has his lusty Spring, when fancy clear
Takes in all beauty with an easy span;
He has his Summer, when luxuriously
Spring's honeyed cud of youthful thought he loves
To ruminate, and by such dreaming high
Is nearest unto heaven; quiet coves
His soul has in its Autumn, when his wings
He furleth close; contented so to look
On mists in idleness—to let fair things
Pass by unheeded as a threshold brook.
He has his Winter, too, of pale misfeature,
Or else he would forego his mortal nature.

WHEN I have fears that I may cease to be
Before my pen has gleaned my teeming brain,
Before high-pilèd books, in charact'ry
Hold like rich garners the full-ripened grain;
When I behold, upon the night's starred face,
Huge cloudy symbols of a high romance,
And think that I may never live to trace
Their shadows, with the magic hand of chance;
And when I feel, fair creature of an hour!
That I shall never look upon thee more,
Never have relish in the faery power
Of unreflecting love!—then on the shore
Of the wide world I stand alone, and think
Till Love and Fame to nothingness do sink.

TO SLEEP.

O SOFT embalmer of the still midnight!
Shutting, with careful fingers and benign,
Our gloom-pleased eyes, embowered from the light,
Enshaded in forgetfulness divine:
O soothest Sleep! if so it please thee, close,
In midst of this thine hymn, my willing eyes,
Or wait the amen, ere thy poppy throws
Around my bed its lulling charities;
Then save me, or the passèd day will shine
Upon my pillow, breeding many woes;
Save me from curious conscience, that still lords
Its strength, for darkness burrowing like a mole:
Turn the key deftly in the oilèd wards,
And seal the hushèd casket of my soul.

THE day is gone, and all its sweets are gone!
Sweet voice, sweet lips, soft hand and softer breast;
Warm breath, light whisper, tender semi-tone,
Bright eyes, accomplished shape, and lang'rous waist!
Faded the flower and all its budded charms,
Faded the sight of beauty from my eyes,
Faded the shape of beauty from my arms,
Faded the voice, warmth, whiteness, paradise—
Vanished unseasonably at shut of eve,
When the dusk holiday—or holinight
Of fragrant-curtained love begins to weave
The woof of darkness thick, for hid delight.
But, as I've read Love's missal through to-day,
He'll let me sleep, seeing I fast and pray.

ON A PICTURE OF LEANDER.

COME hither, all sweet maidens soberly,
Down-looking aye, and with a chastened light
Hid in the fringes of your eyelids white,
And meekly let your fair hands joinèd be,
As if so gentle that ye could not see,
Untouched, a victim of your beauty bright,
Sinking away to his young spirit's night,
Sinking bewildered 'mid the dreary sea:
'Tis young Leander toiling to his death;
Nigh swooning, he doth purse his weary lips
For Hero's cheek, and smiles against her smile.
O horrid dream! see how his body dips,
Dead-heavy; arms and shoulders gleam awhile:
He's gone; up bubbles all his amorous breath!

KEATS'S LAST SONNET.

BRIGHT star! would I were steadfast as thou art,—
Not in lone splendour hung aloft the night,
And watching, with eternal lids apart,
Like Nature's patient sleepless Eremite,
The moving waters at their priestlike task
Of pure ablution round earth's human shores,
Or gazing on the new soft-fallen mask
Of snow upon the mountains and the moors:—
No—yet still steadfast, still unchangeable,
Pillowed upon my fair Love's ripening breast,
To feel for ever its soft swell and fall,
Awake for ever in a sweet unrest;
Still, still to hear her tender-taken breath,
And so live ever,—or else swoon to death.

ON THE DEATH OF QUEEN CAROLINE.

WHO shall lament to know thy aching head
Hath found its pillow?—that in long repose
Great Death, the noblest of thy kingly foes,
Hath laid thee, and, with sacred veil outspread,
Guards thee from basest insults? Thou hast led
A solitary course,—among the great
A regal hermitress, despoiled of state,
Or mocked and fretted by one tattered shred
Of melancholy grandeur: thou didst wed
Only to be more mournfully alone!
But now thy sad regalities o'erthrown,
No more an alien from the common fate,
Thou hast one human blessing for thine own—
A place of rest in Nature's kindliest bed.

THE MEMORY OF THE POETS.

THE fame of those pure bards whose fancies lie
Like glorious clouds in summer's calmest even,
Fringing the western skirts of darkening heaven,
And sprinkled o'er with hues of rainbow dye,
Awakes no voice of thunder, which may vie
With mighty chiefs' renown;—from ages gone,
In low undying strain it lengthens on,
Earth's greenest solitudes with joy to fill,—
Felt breathing in the silence of the sky,
Or trembling in the gush of new-born rill,
Or whispering o'er the lake's undimpled breast;
Yet blest to live when trumpet notes are still,
To wake a pulse of earth-born ecstasy
In the deep bosom of eternal rest.

THEY say that thou wert lovely on thy bier,
More lovely than in life; that when the thrall
Of earth was loosed, it seemed as though a pall
Of years were lifted, and thou didst appear,
Such as of old amidst thy home's calm sphere
Thou sat'st, a kindly Presence felt by all
In joy or grief, from morn to evening-fall,
The peaceful Genius of that mansion dear.
Was it the craft of all-persuading Love
That wrought this marvel? or is Death indeed
A mighty master, gifted from above
With alchemy benign, to wounded hearts
Minist'ring thus, by quaint and subtle arts,
Strange comfort, whereon after-thought may feed?

TO A FRIEND

WHEN we were idlers with the loitering rills,
The need of human love we little noted:
Our love was nature; and the peace that floated
On the white mist, and dwelt upon the hills,
To sweet accord subdued our wayward wills:
One soul was ours, one mind, one heart devoted,
That, wisely doating, asked not why it doated,
And ours the unknown joy, which knowing kills.
But now I find how dear thou wert to me;
That man is more than half of nature's treasure,
Of that fair beauty which no eye can see,
Of that sweet music which no ear can measure;
And now the streams may sing for others' pleasure,
The hills sleep on in their eternity.

WHAT was't awakened first the untried ear
Of that sole man who was all human kind?—
Was it the gladsome welcome of the wind,
Stirring the leaves that never yet were sere?
The four mellifluous streams which flowed so near,
Their lulling murmurs all in one combined?
The note of bird unnamed? The startled hind
Bursting the brake—in wonder, not in fear,
Of her new lord? Or did the holy ground
Send forth mysterious melody to greet
The gracious pressure of immaculate feet?
Did viewless seraphs rustle all around.
Making sweet music out of air as sweet?
Or his own voice awake him with its sound?

LONG time a child, and still a child, when years
Had painted manhood on my cheek, was I,—
For yet I lived like one not born to die;
A thriftless prodigal of smiles and tears,
No hope I needed, and I knew no fears.
But sleep, though sweet, is only sleep; and waking,
I waked to sleep no more; at once o'ertaking
The vanguard of my age, with all arrears
Of duty on my back. Nor child, nor man,
Nor youth, nor sage, I find my head is gray,
For I have lost the race I never ran:
A rathe December blights my lagging May;
And still I am a child, though I be old:
Time is my debtor for my years untold.

TOO true it is my time of power was spent
In idly watering weeds of casual growth,
That wasted energy to desperate sloth
Declined, and fond self-seeking discontent;
That the huge debt for all that Nature lent
I sought to cancel, and was nothing loth
To deem myself an outlaw, severed both
From duty and from hope,—yea, blindly sent
Without an errand, where I would to stray:—
Too true it is that, knowing now my state,
I weakly mourn the sin I ought to hate,
Nor love the law I yet would fain obey:
But true it is, above all law and fate
Is Faith, abiding the appointed day.

IF I have sinned in act, I may repent;
If I have erred in thought, I may disclaim
My silent error, and yet feel no shame;
But if my soul, big with an ill intent,
Guilty in will, by fate be innocent,
Or being bad, yet murmurs at the curse
And incapacity of being worse,
That makes my hungry passion still keep Lent
In keen expectance of a Carnival,—
Where, in all worlds that round the sun revolve
And shed their influence on this passive ball,
Abides a power that can my soul absolve?
Could any sin survive and be forgiven,
One sinful wish would make a hell of heaven.

COULD I but harmonize one kindly thought,
Fix one fair image in a snatch of song,
Which maids might warble as they tripped along;
Or could I ease the labouring heart, o'erfraught
With passionate truths for which the mind untaught
Lacks form and utterance, with a single line;
Might rustic lovers woo in phrase of mine,
I should not deem that I had lived for nought.
The world were welcome to forget my name,
Could I bequeath a few remembered words—
Like his, the bard that never dreamed of fame,
Whose rhymes preserve from harm the pious birds;
Or his, that dim full many a star-bright eye
With woe for Barbara Allen's cruelty.

TO A LOFTY BEAUTY

FROM HER POOR KINSMAN.

FAIR maid, had I not heard thy baby cries,
Nor seen thy girlish, sweet vicissitude,
Thy mazy motions, striving to elude,
Yet wooing still a parent's watchful eyes,
Thy humours, many as the opal's dyes,
And lovely all ;—methinks thy scornful mood,
And bearing high of stately womanhood,—
Thy brow, where Beauty sits to tyrannize
O'er humble love, had made me sadly fear thee :
For never sure was seen a royal bride
Whose gentleness gave grace to so much pride,—
My very thoughts would tremble to be near thee ;
But when I see thee at thy father's side,
Old times unqueen thee, and old loves endear thee.

NIGHT.

THE crackling embers on the hearth are dead;
The indoor note of industry is still;
The latch is fast; upon the window-sill
The small birds wait not for their daily bread;
The voiceless flowers—how quietly they shed
Their nightly odours; and the household rill
Murmurs continuous dulcet sounds that fill
The vacant expectation, and the dread
Of listening night. And haply now She sleeps;
For all the garrulous noises of the air
Are hushed in peace; the soft dew silent weeps,
Like hopeless lovers for a maid so fair:—
Oh! that I were the happy dream that creeps
To her soft heart, to find my image there.

TO SHAKSPEARE.

THE soul of man is larger than the sky,
Deeper than ocean, or the abysmal dark
Of the unfathomed centre. Like that Ark,
Which in its sacred hold uplifted high,
O'er the drowned hills, the human family,
And stock reserved of every living kind;
So, in the compass of the single mind,
The seeds and pregnant forms in essence lie
That make all worlds. Great poet, 'twas thy art
To know thyself, and in thyself to be
Whate'er love, hate, ambition, destiny,
Or the firm, fatal purpose of the heart,
Can make of Man. Yet thou wert still the same,
Serene of thought, unhurt by thy own flame.

HOMER.

FAR from the sight of earth, yet bright and plain
As the clear noon-day sun, an 'orb of song'
Lovely and bright is seen amid the throng
Of lesser stars, that rise, and wax, and wane,
The transient rulers of the fickle main;
One constant light gleams through the dark and long
And narrow aisle of memory. How strong,
How fortified with all the numerous train
Of truths wert thou, great poet of mankind,
Who told'st in verse as mighty as the sea,
And various as the voices of the wind,
The strength of passion rising in the glee
Of battle. Fear was glorified by thee,
And Death is lovely in thy tale enshrined.

SEPTEMBER.

THE dark green Summer, with its massive hues,
Fades into Autumn's tincture manifold;
A gorgeous garniture of fire and gold
The high slope of the ferny hills indues;
The mists of morn in slumbering layers diffuse
O'er glimmering rock, smooth lake, and spiked array
Of hedgerow thorns, a unity of gray;
All things appear their tangible form to lose
In ghostly vastness. But anon the gloom
Melts, as the Sun puts off his muddy veil;
And now the birds their twittering songs resume,
All Summer silent in the leafy dale.
In Spring they piped of love on every tree,
But now they sing the song of memory.

PRAYER.

THERE is an awful quiet in the air,
And the sad earth, with moist imploring eye,
Looks wide and wakeful at the pondering sky,
Like Patience slow-subsiding to Despair.
But see, the blue smoke as a voiceless prayer,
Sole witness of a secret sacrifice,
Unfolds its tardy wreaths, and multiplies
Its soft chameleon breathings in the rare
Capacious ether,—so it fades away,
And nought is seen beneath the pendent blue,
The undistinguishable waste of day.
So have I dreamed!—oh, may the dream be true!—
That praying souls are purged from mortal hue,
And grow as pure as He to whom they pray.

PRAYER.

BE not afraid to pray—to pray is right.
Pray, if thou canst, with hope; but ever pray,
Though hope be weak, or sick with long delay;
Pray in the darkness, if there be no light.
Far is the time, remote from human sight,
When war and discord on the earth shall cease;
Yet every prayer for universal peace
Avails the blessèd time to expedite.
Whate'er is good to wish, ask that of Heaven,
Though it be what thou canst not hope to see:
Pray to be perfect, though material leaven
Forbid the spirit so on earth to be;
But if for any wish thou darest not pray,
Then pray to God to cast that wish away.

'*MULTUM DILEXIT.*'

SHE sat and wept beside His feet; the weight
Of sin oppressed her heart; for all the blame,
And the poor malice of the worldly shame,
To her was past, extinct, and out of date:
Only the *sin* remained,—the leprous state;
She would be melted by the heat of love,
By fires far fiercer than are blown to prove
And purge the silver ore adulterate.
She sat and wept, and with her untressed hair
Still wiped the feet she was so blest to touch;
And He wiped off the soiling of despair
From her sweet soul, because she loved so much.
I am a sinner, full of doubts and fears:
Make me a humble thing of love and tears.

WRITTEN IN A VOLUME OF SHAKSPEARE.

HOW bravely Autumn paints upon the sky
The gorgeous fame of Summer which is fled!
Hues of all flowers that in their ashes lie,
Trophied in that fair light whereon they fed,—
Tulip, and hyacinth, and sweet rose red,—
Like exhalations from the leafy mould,
Look here how honour glorifies the dead,
And warms their scutcheons with a glance of gold!
Such is the memory of poets old,
Who on Parnassus hill have bloomed elate;
Now they are laid under their marbles cold,
And turned to clay whereof they were create;
But God Apollo hath them all enrolled,
And blazoned on the very clouds of fate.

SILENCE.

THERE is a silence where hath been no sound,
There is a silence where no sound may be,
In the cold grave—under the deep deep sea,
Or in wide desert where no life is found,
Which hath been mute, and still must sleep profound;
No voice is hushed—no life treads silently,
But clouds and cloudy shadows wander free,
That never spoke, over the idle ground:
But in green ruins, in the desolate walls
Of antique palaces, where Man hath been,
Though the dun fox, or wild hyena, calls,
And owls, that flit continually between,
Shriek to the echo, and the low winds moan,
There the true Silence is, self-conscious and alone.

DEATH.

IT is not death, that sometime in a sigh
This eloquent breath shall take its speechless flight;
That sometime these bright stars, that now reply
In sunlight to the sun, shall set in night;
That this warm conscious flesh shall perish quite,
And all life's ruddy springs forget to flow;
That thoughts shall cease, and the immortal sprite
Be lapped in alien clay and laid below;
It is not death to know this,—but to know
That pious thoughts, which visit at new graves
In tender pilgrimage, will cease to go
So duly and so oft,—and when grass waves
Over the past-away, there may be then
No resurrection in the minds of men.

GIVE me thy joy in sorrow, gracious Lord,
And sorrow's self shall like to joy appear!
Although the world should waver in its sphere
I tremble not if Thou thy peace afford;
But, Thou withdrawn, I am but as a chord
That vibrates to the pulse of hope and fear:
Nor rest I more than harps which to the air
Must answer when we place their tuneful board
Against the blast, which thrill unmeaning woe
Even in their sweetness. So no earthly wing
E'er sweeps me but to sadden. Oh, place Thou
My heart beyond the world's sad vibrating—
And where but in Thyself? Oh, circle me,
That I may feel no touches save of Thee.

HEED not a world that neither thee can keep,
Nor vestige of thee, whatsoe'er thy lot—
Of thee or thine, nor mark when thou art not.
No more !—engulfed within the sounding deep,
Faint and more faint the billowy circles sweep,
And trembling own the shock; then 'tis forgot:
The leaf's still image anchors on the spot,
The wave is in its noonday couch asleep.
We marked the eddying whirlpools closing o'er
Where he had been; but who the path profound—
What thought can follow 'neath the watery floor,
'Mid sights of strangeness and untravelled caves,
Ocean's wild deeps of ever-moving waves,
A boundless, new horizon spreading round?

HIDDEN JOYS.

PLEASURES lie thickest where no pleasures seem:
There's not a leaf that falls upon the ground
But holds some joy, of silence or of sound,
Some sprite begotten of a summer dream.
The very meanest things are made supreme
With innate ecstasy. No grain of sand
But moves a bright and million-peopled land,
And hath its Edens and its Eves, I deem.
For Love, though blind himself, a curious eye
Hath lent me, to behold the hearts of things,
And touched mine ear with power. Thus, far or nigh,
Minute or mighty, fixed or free with wings,
Delight from many a nameless covert sly
Peeps sparkling, and in tones familiar sings.

'PATER VESTER PASCIT ILLA.'

OUR bark is on the waters! wide around
The wandering wave; above, the lonely sky:
Hush! a young sea-bird floats, and that quick cry
Shrieks to the levelled weapon's echoing sound:
Grasp its lank wing, and on, with reckless bound!
Yet, creature of the surf, a sheltering breast
To-night shall haunt in vain thy far-off nest,
A call unanswered search the rocky ground.
Lord of leviathan! when Ocean heard
Thy gathering voice, and sought his native breeze;
When whales first plunged with life, and the proud deep
Felt unborn tempests heave in troubled sleep,
Thou didst provide, even for this nameless bird,
Home and a natural love amid the surging seas.

A PRAYER.

O BROODING Spirit of Wisdom and of Love,
Whose mighty wings even now o'ershadow me,
Absorb me in thine own immensity,
And raise me far my finite self above!
Purge vanity away, and the weak care
That name or fame of me may widely spread;
And the deep wish keep burning in their stead,
Thy blissful influence afar to bear,—
Or see it borne! Let no desire of ease,
No lack of courage, faith, or love, delay
Mine own steps on that high thought-paven way
In which my soul her clear commission sees:
Yet with an equal joy let me behold
Thy chariot o'er that way by others rolled.

SHAKESPEARE.

WHO says that Shakespeare did not know his lot,
But deemed that in time's manifold decay
His memory should die and pass away,
And that within the shrine of human thought
To him no altar should be reared? O hush!
O veil thyself awhile in solemn awe!
Nor dream that all man's mighty spirit-law
Thou know'st; how all the hidden fountains gush
Of the soul's silent prophesying power.
For as deep Love, 'mid all its wayward pain,
Cannot believe but it is loved again,
Even so strong Genius, with its ample dower
Of a world-grasping love, from that deep feeling
Wins of its own wide sway the clear revealing.

NOT TO THE MULTITUDE.

NOT to the multitude, oh! not to them,
But to the sacred few, the circle small
Which formed thy world and was thy all-in-all,
Entrust thy memory; and like a gem,
Love's gift, worn ever next the heart, 'twill lie
Imbedded in delight, deep, stainless, warm;
For if thy living voice, aspéct and form
Gladdened the ear and pleased the watchful eye
Of old affection, doubt not thou that death
Will make thee doubly dear, and that no voice
Will e'er again those constant souls rejoice,
Like that which God took from them with thy breath.
Thou diest to the crowd, but not to these:
They see thee in the mist, and hear thee in the breeze.

A MEDITATION AT NETLEY ABBEY.

NOW dewy twilight o'er these shattered walls
Breathes from the closing eyelids of the skies ;
The blessèd night, with starry influence, falls
O'er carved remains, and boughs that heavenward rise ;
The healing gentleness of evening sighs
From arch to arch, and thrills the slumbering trees ;
And, like the memory of dead centuries,
The shadows stride before the lingering breeze.
The pinions of the heavens, with fleckered gloom,
Enfold the world, and the adoring earth
To all religion ; here there is no tomb,
But holy promise of that second birth,
When o'er man's ruin Beauty shall return,
And perfect Love shall light his funeral urn.

THE OCEAN.

THE Ocean, at the bidding of the Moon,
For ever changes with his restless tide;
Flung shoreward now, to be regathered soon
With kingly pauses of reluctant pride,
And semblance of return. Anon from home
He issues forth again, high-ridged and free,
The seething hiss of his tumultuous foam
Like armies whispering where great echoes be!
Oh! leave me here upon this beach to rove,
Mute listener to that sound so grand and lone—
A glorious sound, deep-drawn and strongly thrown,
And reaching those on mountain-heights above;
To British ears, as who shall scorn to own,
A tutelar fond voice, a saviour-tone of love!

ON STARTLING SOME PIGEONS.

A HUNDRED wings are dropt as soft as one,
Now ye are lighted! Pleasing to my sight
The fearful circle of your wondering flight,
Rapid and loud, and drawing homeward soon;
And then, the sober chiding of your tone,
As there ye sit, from your own roofs arraigning
My trespass on your haunts, so boldly done,
Sounds like a solemn and a just complaining:
O happy, happy race! for though there clings
A feeble fear about your timid clan,
Yet are ye blest! with not a thought that brings
Disquietude,—while proud and sorrowing man,
An eagle, weary of his mighty wings,
With anxious inquest fills his mortal span!

O GOD, IMPART THY BLESSING.

O GOD, impart thy blessing to my cries!
I trust but faintly, and I daily err;
The waters of my heart are oft astir,
An angel's there! and yet I cannot rise!
Ah! would my Lord were here amongst us still,
Proffering his bosom to his servant's brow;
Too oft that holy life comes o'er us now
Like twilight echoes from a distant hill;
We long for his pure looks and words sublime;
His lowly-lofty innocence and grace;
The talk sweet-toned, and blessing all the time;
The mountain sermon and the ruthful gaze;
The cheerly credence gathered from his face;
His voice in village groups at eve or prime!

THE LATTICE AT SUNRISE.

AS on my bed at dawn I mused and prayed,
I saw my lattice prankt upon the wall,
The flaunting leaves and flitting birds withal—
A sunny phantom interlaced with shade;
'Thanks be to heaven!' in happy mood I said,
'What sweeter aid my matins could befall
Than this fair glory from the East hath made?
What holy sleights hath God, the Lord of all,
To bid us feel and see! we are not free
To say we see not, for the glory comes
Nightly and daily, like the flowing sea;
His lustre pierceth through the midnight glooms;
And, at prime hour, behold! He follows me
With golden shadows to my secret rooms!'

THE HOLY EMERALD,

SAID TO BE THE ONLY TRUE LIKENESS OF CHRIST.

THE gem, to which the artist did entrust
That face which now outshines the Cherubim,
Gave up, full willingly, its emerald dust,
To take Christ's likeness—to make room for him.
So must it be, if thou wouldst bear about
Thy Lord—thy shining surface must be lowered,
Thy goodly prominence be chipt and scored,
Till those deep scars have brought his features out:
Sharp be the stroke and true, make no complaints;
For heavenly lines thou givest earthy grit:
But oh! how oft our coward spirit faints,
When we are called our jewels to submit
To this keen graver, which so oft hath writ
The Saviour's image on his wounded saints!

ON SEEING A LITTLE CHILD SPIN A COIN OF ALEXANDER THE GREAT.

THIS is the face of him, whose quick resource
Of eye and hand subdued Bucephalus,
And made the shadow of a startled horse
A foreground for his glory. It is thus
They hand him down; this coin of Philip's son
Recalls his life, his glories, and misdeeds;
And that abortive court of Babylon,
Where the world's throne was left among the reeds.
His dust is lost among the ancient dead,
A coin his only presence: he is gone:
And all but this half-mythic image fled—
A simple child may do him shame and slight;
'Twixt thumb and finger take the golden head,
And spin the horns of Ammon out of sight.

OUR MARY AND THE CHILD-MUMMY.

WHEN the four quarters of the world shall rise,
Men, women, children, at the Judgment-time,
Perchance this Memphian girl, dead ere her prime,
Shall drop her mask, and with dark new-born eyes
Salute our English Mary, loved and lost;
The Father knows her little scroll of prayer,
And life as pure as his Egyptian air;
For, though she knew not Jesus, nor the cost
At which He won the world, she learned to pray;
And though our own sweet babe on Christ's good name
Spent her last breath, premonished and advised
Of Him, and in his glorious Church baptized,
She will not spurn this old-world child away,
Nor put her poor embalmèd heart to shame.

LETTY'S GLOBE,

OR SOME IRREGULARITIES IN A FIRST LESSON IN GEOGRAPHY.

WHEN Letty had scarce passed her third glad year,
And her young artless words began to flow,
One day we gave the child a coloured sphere
Of the wide earth, that she might mark and know
By tint and outline, all its sea and land.
She patted all the world; old empires peeped
Between her baby-fingers; her soft hand
Was welcome at all frontiers; how she leaped,
And laughed, and prattled, in her world-wide bliss!
But when we turned her sweet unlearnèd eye
On our own Isle, she raised a joyous cry,
Oh! yes, I see it, Letty's home is there!
And while she hid all England with a kiss,
Bright over Europe fell her golden hair.

THE SOUL'S EXPRESSION.

WITH stammering lips and insufficient sound,
I strive and struggle to deliver right
That music of my nature, day and night
With dream and thought and feeling interwound,
And inly answering all the senses round
With octaves of a mystic depth and height
Which step out grandly to the infinite
From the dark edges of the sensual ground.
This song of soul I struggle to outbear
Through portals of the sense, sublime and whole
And utter all myself into the air:
But if I did it,—as the thunder-roll
Breaks its own cloud, my flesh would perish there,
Before that dread apocalypse of soul.

BEREAVEMENT.

WHEN some Beloveds, 'neath whose eyelids lay
The sweet lights of my childhood, one by one
Did leave me dark before the natural sun,
And I astonied fell, and could not pray,—
A thought within me to myself did say,
'Is God less God, that *thou* art left undone?
Rise, worship, bless Him, in this sackcloth spun,
As in that purple!'—But I answered, Nay!
What child his filial heart in words can loose
If he behold his tender father raise
The hand that chastens sorely? can he choose
But sob in silence with an upward gaze?—
And *my* great Father, thinking fit to bruise,
Discerns in speechless tears both prayer and praise.

CONSOLATION.

ALL are not taken; there are left behind
Living Beloveds, tender looks to bring
And make the daylight still a happy thing,
And tender voices, to make soft the wind:
But if it were not so—if I could find
No love in all the world for comforting,
Nor any path but hollowly did ring,
Where 'dust to dust' the love from life disjoined,
And if, before those sepulchres unmoving
I stood alone, (as some forsaken lamb
Goes bleating up the moors in weary dearth)
Crying 'Where are ye, O my loved and loving?'—
I know a Voice would sound, 'Daughter, I AM.
Can I suffice for HEAVEN and not for earth?'

IRREPARABLENESS.

I HAVE been in the meadows all the day
And gathered there the nosegay that you see,
Singing within myself as bird or bee
When such do field-work on a morn of May.
But now I look upon my flowers, decay
Has met them in my hands more fatally
Because more warmly clasped,—and sobs are free
To come instead of songs. What do you say,
Sweet counsellors, dear friends? that I should go
Back straightway to the fields and gather more?
Another, sooth, may do it, but not I!
My heart is very tired, my strength is low,
My hands are full of blossoms plucked before,
Held dead within them till myself shall die.

TEARS.

THANK God, bless God, all ye who suffer not
More grief than ye can weep for. That is well—
That is light grieving! lighter none befell
Since Adam forfeited the primal lot.
Tears! what are tears? The babe weeps in its cot,
The mother singing; at her marriage-bell
The bride weeps, and before the oracle
Of high-faned hills the poet has forgot
Such moisture on his cheeks. Thank God for grace,
Ye who weep only! If, as some have done,
Ye grope tear-blinded in a desert place
And touch but tombs,—look up! those tears will run
Soon in long rivers down the lifted face,
And leave the vision clear for stars and sun.

GRIEF.

I tell you, hopeless grief is passionless ;
That only men incredulous of despair,
Half-taught in anguish, through the midnight air
Beat upward to God's throne in loud access
Of shrieking and reproach. Full desertness
In souls as countries, lieth silent-bare
Under the blanching, vertical eye-glare
Of the absolute Heavens. Deep-hearted man, express
Grief for thy Dead in silence like to death—
Most like a monumental statue set
In everlasting watch and moveless woe,
Till itself crumble to the dust beneath.
Touch it ; the marble eyelids are not wet :
If it could weep, it could arise and go.

SUBSTITUTION.

WHEN some belovèd voice that was to you
Both sound and sweetness, faileth suddenly,
And silence, against which you dare not cry,
Aches round you like a strong disease and new—
What hope? what help? what music will undo
That silence to your sense? Not friendship's sigh,
Not reason's subtle count; not melody
Of viols, nor of pipes that Faunus blew;
Not songs of poets, nor of nightingales
Whose hearts leap upward through the cypress-trees
To the clear moon; nor yet the spheric laws
Self-chanted, nor the angels' sweet All hails,
Met in the smile of God: nay, none of these.
Speak THOU, availing Christ!—and fill this pause.

COMFORT.

SPEAK low to me, my Saviour, low and sweet
From out the hallelujahs, sweet and low,
Lest I should fear and fall, and miss Thee so
Who art not missed by any that entreat.
Speak to me as to Mary at thy feet!
And if no precious gums my hands bestow,
Let my tears drop like amber while I go
In reach of thy divinest voice complete
In humanest affection—thus, in sooth,
To lose the sense of losing. As a child,
Whose song-bird seeks the wood for evermore,
Is sung to in its stead by mother's mouth
Till, sinking on her breast, love-reconciled,
He sleeps the faster that he wept before.

PERPLEXED MUSIC.

EXPERIENCE, like a pale musician, holds
A dulcimer of patience in his hand,
Whence harmonies we cannot understand,
Of God's will in his worlds, the strain unfolds
In sad, perplexèd minors: deathly colds
Fall on us while we hear, and countermand
Our sanguine heart back from the fancy-land
With nightingales in visionary wolds.
We murmur, 'Where is any certain tune
Or measured music in such notes as these?'
But angels, leaning from the golden seat,
Are not so minded; their fine ear hath won
The issue of completed cadences,
And, smiling down the stars, they whisper—SWEET.

FUTURITY.

AND, O belovèd voices, upon which
Ours passionately call because erelong
Ye brake off in the middle of that song
We sang together softly, to enrich
The poor world with the sense of love, and witch
The heart out of things evil,—I am strong,
Knowing ye are not lost for aye among
The hills, with last year's thrush. God keeps a niche
In Heaven to hold our idols: and albeit
He brake them to our faces and denied
That our close kisses should impair their white,
I know we shall behold them raised, complete,
The dust swept from their beauty,—glorified
New Memnons singing in the great God-light.

FLUSH OR FAUNUS.

YOU see this dog; it was but yesterday
I mused forgetful of his presence here
Till thought on thought drew downward tear on tear:
When from the pillow where wet-cheeked I lay,
A head as hairy as Faunus thrust its way
Right sudden against my face, two golden-clear
Great eyes astonished mine, a drooping ear
Did flap me on either cheek to dry the spray!
I started first as some Arcadian
Amazed by goatly god in twilight grove;
But as the bearded vision closelier ran
My tears off, I knew Flush, and rose above
Surprise and sadness,—thanking the true PAN
Who by low creatures leads to heights of love.

CHEERFULNESS TAUGHT BY REASON.

I THINK we are too ready with complaint
In this fair world of God's. Had we no hope
Indeed beyond the zenith and the slope
Of yon grey blank of sky, we might grow faint
To muse upon eternity's constraint
Round our aspirant souls; but since the scope
Must widen early, is it well to droop,
For a few days consumed in loss and taint?
O pusillanimous heart, be comforted
And, like a cheerful traveller, take the road,
Singing beside the hedge. What if the bread
Be bitter in thine inn, and thou unshod
To meet the flints? At least it may be said,
Because the way is *short*, I thank Thee, God.

ADEQUACY.

NOW, by the verdure on thy thousand hills,
Belovèd England, doth the earth appear
Quite good enough for men to overbear
The will of God in, with rebellious wills!
We cannot say the morning-sun fulfils
Ingloriously its course, nor that the clear
Strong stars without significance insphere
Our habitation: we, meantime, our ills
Heap up against this good and lift a cry
Against this work-day world, this ill-spread feast,
As if ourselves were better certainly
Than what we come to. Maker and High Priest,
I ask Thee not my joys to multiply,—
Only to make me worthier of the least.

SONNETS FROM THE PORTUGUESE.

I.

I THOUGHT once how Theocritus had sung
Of the sweet years, the dear and wished-for years,
Who each one in a gracious hand appears
To bear a gift for mortals, old or young:
And, as I mused it in his antique tongue,
I saw, in gradual vision through my tears,
The sweet, sad years, the melancholy years,
Those of my own life, who by turns had flung
A shadow across me. Straightway I was 'ware,
So weeping, how a mystic shape did move
Behind me, and drew me backward by the hair;
And a voice said in mastery, while I strove,—
'Guess now who holds thee?'—'Death,' I said. But, there,
The silver answer rang,—'Not Death, but Love.'

SONNETS FROM THE PORTUGUESE.

II.

IF thou must love me, let it be for nought
Except for love's sake only. Do not say
'I love her for her smile—her look—her way
Of speaking gently,—for a trick of thought
That falls in well with mine, and certes brought
A sense of pleasant ease on such a day;'
For these things in themselves, Beloved, may
Be changed, or change for thee,—and love, so wrought,
May be unwrought so. Neither love me for
Thine own dear pity's wiping my cheeks dry,—
A creature might forget to weep, who bore
Thy comfort long, and lose thy love thereby!
But love me for love's sake, that evermore
Thou may'st love on, through love's eternity.

SONNETS FROM THE PORTUGUESE.

III.

IS it indeed so? If I lay here dead,
Wouldst thou miss any life in losing mine?
And would the sun for thee more coldly shine
Because of grave-damps falling round my head?
I marvelled, my Beloved, when I read
Thy thought so in the letter. I am thine—
But . . *so* much to thee? Can I pour thy wine
While my hands tremble? Then my soul, instead
Of dreams of death, resumes life's lower range.
Then, love me, Love! look on me—breathe on me!
As brighter ladies do not count it strange,
For love, to give up acres and degree,
I yield the grave for thy sake, and exchange
My near sweet view of Heaven for earth with thee!

SONNETS FROM THE PORTUGUESE.

IV.

HOW do I love thee? Let me count the ways.
I love thee to the depth and breadth and height
My soul can reach, when feeling out of sight
For the ends of Being and ideal Grace.
I love thee to the level of everyday's
Most quiet need, by sun and candlelight.
I love thee freely, as men strive for Right;
I love thee purely, as they turn from Praise;
I love thee with the passion put to use
In my old griefs, and with my childhood's faith.
I love thee with a love I seemed to lose
With my lost saints,—I love thee with the breath,
Smiles, tears, of all my life!—and, if God choose,
I shall but love thee better after death.

THE DAISY.

SWEET flower, thou art a link of memory,
An emblem to the heart of bright days flown;
And in thy silence too there is a tone
That stirs the inmost soul more potently
Than if a trumpet's-voice had rent the sky!
I love thee much, for when I stray alone,
Stealing from Nature her calm thoughts, which own
No self-disturbance, and my curious eye
Catches thy magic glance, methinks a spell
Has touched my soul: once more I grow a boy;
Once more my thoughts, that, as a passing-bell,
Seemed to toll o'er departed shapes of joy,
Change to old chimes, and in my bosom swell
Fresh pulses of a bliss without alloy.

GLASTONBURY.

ON thy green marge, thou vale of Avalon,
Not for that thou art crowned with ancient towers
And shafts and clustered pillars many a one,
Love I to dream away the sunny hours;
Not for that here in charmèd slumber lie
The holy relics of that British king
Who was the flower of knightly chivalry,
Do I stand blest past power of uttering;—
But for that on thy cowslip-sprinkled sod
Alit of old the olive-bearing bird,
Meek messenger of purchased peace with God;
And the first hymns that Britain ever heard
Arose, the low preluding melodies
To the sweetest anthem that hath reached the skies.

RISE, said the Master, come unto the feast :—
She heard the call and rose with willing feet ;
But thinking it not otherwise than meet
For such a bidding to put on her best,
She is gone from us for a few short hours
Into her bridal closet, there to wait
For the unfolding of the palace gate,
That gives her entrance to the blissful bowers.
We have not seen her yet, though we have been
Full often to her chamber door, and oft
Have listened underneath the postern green,
And laid fresh flowers, and whispered short and soft ;
But she hath made no answer ; and the day
From the clear west is fading fast away.

WRITTEN IN EDINBURGH.

EVEN thus, methinks, a city reared should be,
Yea, an imperial city, that might hold
Five times a hundred noble towns in fee,
And either with their might of Babel old,
Or the rich Roman pomp of empery
Might stand compare, highest in arts enrolled,
Highest in arms; brave tenement for the free,
Who never crouch to thrones, or sin for gold.
Thus should her towers be raised—with vicinage
Of clear bold hills, that curve her very streets,
As if to vindicate 'mid choicest seats
Of art, abiding Nature's majesty;
And the broad sea beyond, in calm or rage
Chainless alike, and teaching Liberty.

THE garden trees are busy with the shower
That fell ere sunset:.now methinks they talk,
Lowly and sweetly as befits the hour,
One to another down the grassy walk.
Hark the laburnum from his opening flower
This cherry-creeper greets in whisper light,
While the grim fir, rejoicing in the night,
Hoarse mutters to the murmuring sycamore.
What shall I deem their converse? Would they hail
The wild grey light that fronts yon massive cloud,
Or the half-bow, rising like pillared fire?
Or are they sighing faintly for desire
That with May dawn their leaves may be o'erflowed,
And dews about their feet may never fail?

THE FOUR RELIGIOUS HEATHENS.

I.

HERODOTUS.

'CONVERSE IN FEAR, DURING THE TIME OF YOUR SOJOURNING HERE.'

HE was a mild old man, and cherished much
The weight dark Egypt on his spirit laid ;
And with a sinuous eloquence would touch
For ever at that haven of the dead.
Single romantic words by him were thrown,
As types, on men and places, with a power
Like that of shifting sunlight after shower
Kindling the cones of hills, and journeying on.
He feared the gods and heroes, and spake low
That Echo might not hear in her light room :
He was a dweller underground ; for gloom
Fitted old heathen goodness more than glow ;
And, where love was not, faith might gather mirth
From ore that glistened in pale beds of earth.

II.

NICIAS.

'IN ALL THESE THINGS JOB SINNED NOT BY HIS LIPS, NOR SPOKE HE ANY FOOLISH THINGS AGAINST GOD.'

NURSLING of heathen fear! thy woful being
Was steeped in gentleness by long disease,
Though round thine awestruck mind were ever fleeing
Omens, and signs, and direful presages.
One might believe in frames so gently stern
Some Christian thoughts before their time did burn.
Sadness was unto thee for love; thy spirit
Rose loftily like some hard-featured stone,
Which summer sunbeam never makes its throne,
E'en while it fills the skirts of vapour near it.
One wert thou, Nicias! of the few who urge
Their stricken souls where far-seen Death doth hover
In vision on them, nor may they diverge
From the black line his chilling shadows cover.

III.

SOCRATES.

'OF MAKING MANY BOOKS THERE IS NO END; AND MUCH STUDY IS AN AFFLICTION OF THE FLESH.'

THOU, mighty Heathen, wert not so bereft
Of heavenly helps to thy great-hearted deeds,
That thou shouldst dig for truths in broken creeds,
'Mid the loose sands of four old empires left.
Motions and shadows dimly glowing fell
On thy broad soul from forms invisible.
With its plain grandeur, simple, calm, and free,
What wonder was it that thy life should merit
Sparkles of grace, and angel ministry,
With jealous glimpses of the world of spirit?
Greatest and best in this—that thy pure mind,
Upon its saving mission all intent,
Scorned the untruth of leaving books behind,
To claim for thine what through thy lips was sent.

IV.

SENECA.

'WHEN PETER CAME, HIS SHADOW AT THE LEAST MIGHT OVERSHADOW ANY OF THEM.'

OFT in the crowd and crossings of old Rome
The Christ-like shadow of the gifted Paul,
As he looked forth betimes from his hired home,
Might at this Gentile's hurrying footsteps fall,
When, from his mornings in the Cæsar's hall,
Spurred by great thoughts, the troubled sage might come.

Some balmy truths most surely did he borrow
From the sweet neighbourhood of Christ, to bring
The harsh, hard waters of his heathen spring
In softening ducts o'er wastes of pagan sorrow.
As slips of green from fertile confines shoot
Into the tracts of sand, so heathen duty
Caught from his guided pen a cold, bright beauty,
Where flowers might all but blossom into fruit.

TO CHARLES DICKENS.

GENIUS and its rewards are briefly told:
A liberal nature and a niggard doom,
A difficult journey to a splendid tomb.
New-writ, nor lightly weighed, that story old
In gentle Goldsmith's life I here unfold:
Through other than lone wild or desert-gloom,
In its mere joy and pain, its blight and bloom,
Adventurous. Come with me and behold,
O friend with heart as gentle for distress,
As resolute with fine wise thoughts to bind
The happiest to the unhappiest of our kind,
That there is fiercer crowded misery
In garret-toil and London loneliness
Than in cruel islands 'mid the far-off sea.

BROTHER AND SISTER.

1.

I CANNOT choose but think upon the time
When our two lives grew like two buds that kiss
At lightest thrill from the bee's swinging chime,
Because the one so near the other is.
He was the elder and a little man
Of forty inches, bound to show no dread,
And I the girl that puppy-like now ran,
Now lagged behind my brother's larger tread.
I held him wise, and when he talked to me
Of snakes and birds, and which God loved the best,
I thought his knowledge marked the boundary
Where men grew blind, though angels knew the rest.
If he said 'Hush!' I tried to hold my breath;
Wherever he said 'Come!' I stepped in faith.

BROTHER AND SISTER.

II.

LONG years have left their writing on my brow,
But yet the freshness and the dew-fed beam
Of those young mornings are about me now,
When we two wandered toward the far-off stream
With rod and line. Our basket held a store
Baked for us only, and I thought with joy
That I should have my share, though he had more,
Because he was the elder and a boy.
The firmaments of daisies since to me
Have had those mornings in their opening eyes,
The bunchèd cowslip's pale transparency
Carries that sunshine of sweet memories,
And wild-rose branches take their finest scent
From those blest hours of infantine content.

BROTHER AND SISTER.

III.

OUR mother bade us keep the trodden ways,
Stroked down my tippet, set my brother's frill,
Then with the benediction of her gaze
Clung to us lessening, and pursued us still
Across the homestead to the rookery elms,
Whose tall old trunks had each a grassy mound,
So rich for us, we counted them as realms
With varied products: here were earth-nuts found,
And here the Lady-fingers in deep shade;
Here sloping toward the Moat the rushes grew,
The large to split for pith, the small to braid;
While over all the dark rooks cawing flew.
And made a happy strange solemnity,
A deep-toned chant from life unknown to me.

BROTHER AND SISTER.

IV

THUS rambling we were schooled in deepest lore,
And learned the meanings that give words a soul,
The fear, the love, the primal passionate store,
Whose shaping impulses make manhood whole.
Those hours were seed to all my after good;
My infant gladness, through eye, ear, and touch,
Took easily as warmth a various food
To nourish the sweet skill of loving much.
For who in age shall roam the earth and find
Reasons for loving that will strike out love
With sudden rod from the hard year-pressed mind?
Were reasons sown as thick as stars above,
'Tis love must see them, as the eye sees light:
Day is but Number to the darkened sight.

BROTHER AND SISTER.

V.

SCHOOL parted us; we never found again
That childish world where our two spirits mingled
Like scents from varying roses that remain
One sweetness, nor can evermore be singled.
Yet the twin habit of that early time
Lingered for long about the heart and tongue:
We had been natives of one happy clime
And its dear accent to our utterance clung.
Till the dire years whose awful name is Change
Had grasped our souls still yearning in divorce,
And pitiless shaped them in two forms that range
Two elements which sever their life's course.
But were another childhood-world my share,
I would be born a little sister there.

LIKE a musician that with flying finger
Startles the voice of some new instrument,
And, though he know that in one string are blent
All its extremes of sound, yet still doth linger
Among the lighter threads, fearing to start
The deep soul of that one melodious wire,
Lest it, unanswering, dash his high desire,
And spoil the hopes of his expectant heart:—
Thus, with my mistress oft conversing, I
Stir every lighter theme with careless voice,
Gathering sweet music and celestial joys
From the harmonious soul o'er which I fly;
Yet o'er the one deep master-chord I hover,
And dare not stoop, fearing to tell—I love her.

TO MY MOTHER.

AS winter, in some mild autumnal days,
Breathes such an air as youngest spring discloses,
So age in thee renews an infant's grace,
And clothes thy cheek in soft November roses.
Time hath made friends with Beauty in thy face,
And, since the wheeling Fates must be obeyed
White rime upon thy gracious head he lays,
But whispers gently not to be afraid;
And tenderly, like one that leads the blind,
He soothes thy lingering footsteps to the gate,
While that great Angel, who there keeps his state,
Smiles to behold with what slow feet he moves.
Move slower, gentlier yet, O Time! or find
A way to fix her here, bound by our filial loves.

DAYBREAK IN FEBRUARY.

OVER the ground white snow, and in the air
Silence. The stars, like lamps soon to expire,
Gleam tremblingly; serene and heavenly fair,
The eastern hanging crescent climbeth higher.
See, purple on the azure softly steals,
And Morning, faintly touched with quivering fire,
Leans on the frosty summits of the hills,
Like a young girl over her hoary sire.
Oh, such a dawning over me has come,—
The daybreak of thy purity and love;—
The sadness of the never-satiate tomb
Thy countenance hath power to remove;
And from the sepulchre of Hope thy palm
Can roll the stone, and raise her bright and calm.

THE bubble of the silver-springing waves,
Castalian music, and that flattering sound,
Low rustling of the loved Apollian leaves,
With which my youthful hair was to be crowned,
Grow dimmer in my ears; white Beauty grieves
Over her votary, less frequent found;
And, not untouched by storms, my life-boat heaves
Through the splashed ocean-waters, outward bound.
And as the leaning mariner, his hand
Clasped on his ear, strives trembling to reclaim
Some loved lost echo from the fleeting strand,
So lean I back to the poetic land;
And in my heart a sound, a voice, a name
Hangs, as above the lamp hangs the expiring flame.

TO A FRIEND.

SAD soul, whom God, resuming what He gave,
Medicines with bitter anguish of the tomb,
Cease to oppress the portals of the grave,
And strain thy aching sight across the gloom.
The surged Atlantic's winter-beaten wave
Shall sooner pierce the purpose of the wind
Than thy storm-tossed and heavy-swelling mind
Grasp the full import of his means to save.
Through the dark night lie still; God's faithful grace
Lies hid, like morning, underneath the sea.
Let thy slow hours roll, like these weary stars,
Down to the level ocean patiently;
Till his loved hand shall touch the Eastern bars,
And his full glory shine upon thy face.

TO A FRIEND IN BEREAVEMENT.

NO comfort, nay, no comfort. Yet would I
In Sorrow's cause with Sorrow intercede.
Burst not the great heart,—this is all I plead;
Ah, sentence it to suffer, not to die.
'Comfort?' If Jesus wept at Bethany—
That doze and nap of Death—how may we bleed
Who watch the long sleep that is sleep indeed!
Pointing to Heaven I but remind you why
On earth you still must mourn. He who, being bold
For life-to-come, is false to the past sweet
Of mortal life, hath killed the world above.
For why to live again if not to meet?
And why to meet if not to meet in love?
And why in love if not in that dear love of old?

BEAUTY still walketh on the earth and air :
Our present sunsets are as rich in gold
As ere the Iliad's music was out-rolled,
The roses of the Spring are ever fair,
'Mong branches green still ring-doves coo and pair,
And the deep sea still foams its music old ;
So, if we are at all divinely souled,
This beauty will unloose our bonds of care.
'Tis pleasant, when blue skies are o'er us bending
Within old starry-gated Poesy,
To meet a soul set to no worldly tune,
Like thine, sweet Friend ! Oh, dearer this to me
Than are the dewy trees, the sun, the moon,
Or noble music with a golden ending.

SHEATHED is the river as it glideth by,
Frost-pearled are all the boughs in forests old,
The sheep are huddling close upon the wold,
And over them the stars tremble on high.
Pure joys these winter nights around me lie;—
'Tis fine to loiter through the lighted street
At Christmas time, and guess from brow and pace
The doom and history of each one we meet,
What kind of heart beats in each dusky case;
Whiles startled by the beauty of a face
In a shop-light a moment. Or instead,
To dream of silent fields where calm and deep
The sunshine lieth like a golden sleep—
Recalling sweetest looks of Summers dead.

MISS NIGHTINGALE.

HOW must the soldier's tearful heart expand,
Who from a long and obscure dream of pain,—
His foeman's frown imprinted in his brain,—
Wakes to thy healing face and dewy hand!
When this great noise hath rolled from off the land,
When all those fallen Englishmen of ours
Have bloomed and faded in Crimean flowers,
Thy perfect charity unsoiled shall stand.
Some pitying student of a nobler age,
Lingering o'er this year's half-forgotten page,
Shall see its beauty smiling ever there;
Surprised to tears his beating heart he stills,
Like one who finds among Athenian hills
A Temple like a lily white and fair.

AD MATREM.

MARCH 13, 1863.

OH what a royalty of song should greet
The unclouded advent of thy natal day!
All things of musical utterance should meet
In concord of a many-sounding lay;—
Let the proud trumpet tongue thy noble praise,
The rolling drum reverberate thy fame,
Let fifes and flutes their fluttering voices raise,
And the glad cymbals tinkle to thy name;
Let the clear horn play tribute to thy truth,
The deep-based viol tenderly intone
Thy womanly pity and large heart of ruth;
But of my love let my voice sing alone:
Theme to my jealous lips most dear, most meet,
If that my voice to voice it were more sweet.

AD MATREM.

MARCH 13, 1864.

MUSIC, and frankincense of flowers, belong
To this sweet festival of all the year.
Take, then, the latest blossom of my song,
And to Love's canticle incline thine ear.
What is it that Love chants? thy perfect praise.
What is it that Love prays? worthy to prove.
What is it Love desires? thy length of days.
What is it that Love asks? return of love.
Ah, what requital can Love ask more dear
Than by Love's priceless self to be repaid?
Thy liberal love, increasing year by year,
Hath granted more than all my heart hath prayed,
And, prodigal as Nature, makes me pine
To think how poor my love compared with thine!

A SONNET is a moment's monument,—
Memorial from the Soul's eternity
To one dead deathless hour. Look that it be,
Whether for lustral rite or dire portent,
Of its own arduous fulness reverent:
Carve it in ivory or in ebony,
As Day or Night may rule; and let Time see
Its flowering crest impearled and orient.
A Sonnet is a coin: its face reveals
The soul,—its converse, to what Power 'tis due:—
Whether for tribute to the august appeals
Of Life, or dower in Love's high retinue,
It serve; or, 'mid the dark wharf's cavernous breath,
In Charon's palm it pay the toll to Death.

LOVESIGHT.

WHEN do I see thee most, belovèd one?
When in the light the spirits of mine eyes
Before thy face, their altar, solemnize
The worship of that Love through thee made known?
Or when in the dusk hours (we two alone,)
Close-kissed and eloquent of still replies
Thy twilight-hidden glimmering visage lies,
And my soul only sees thy soul its own?
O love, my love! if I no more should see
Thyself, nor on the earth the shadow of thee,
Nor image of thine eyes in any spring,—
How then should sound upon Life's darkening slope
The ground-whirl of the perished leaves of Hope,
The wind of Death's imperishable wing?

BROKEN MUSIC.

THE mother will not turn, who thinks she hears
Her nursling's speech first grow articulate ;
But breathless with averted eyes elate
She sits, with open lips and open ears,
That it may call her twice. 'Mid doubts and fears
Thus oft my soul has hearkened ; till the song,
A central moan for days, at length found tongue,
And the sweet music welled, and the sweet tears.
But now, whatever while the soul is fain
To list that wonted murmur, as it were
The speech-bound sea-shell's low importunate strain,—
No breath of song, thy voice alone is there,
O bitterly beloved ! and all her gain
Is but the pang of unpermitted prayer.

STILLBORN LOVE.

THE hour which might have been yet might not be,
Which man's and woman's heart conceived and bore,
Yet whereof life was barren,—on what shore
Bides it the breaking of Time's weary sea?
Bondchild of all consummate joys set free,
It somewhere sighs and serves, and mute before
The house of Love, hears through the echoing door
His hours elect in choral consonancy.
But lo! what wedded souls now hand in hand
Together tread at last the immortal strand
With eyes where burning memory lights love home?
Lo! how the little outcast hour has turned
And leaped to them and in their faces yearned:—
'I am your child: O parents, ye have come!'

KNOWN IN VAIN.

AS two whose love, first foolish, widening scope,
Knows suddenly, to music high and soft,
The Holy of holies; who because they scoffed
Are now amazed with shame, nor dare to cope
With the whole truth aloud, lest heaven should ope;
Yet, at their meetings, laugh not as they laughed
In speech; nor speak, at length; but sitting oft
Together, within hopeless sight of hope
For hours are silent:—So it happeneth
When Work and Will awake too late, to gaze
After their life sailed by, and hold their breath.
Ah! who shall dare to search through what sad maze
Thenceforth their incommunicable ways
Follow the desultory feet of Death?

LOST DAYS.

THE lost days of my life until to-day,
What were they, could I see them on the street
Lie as they fell? Would they be ears of wheat
Sown once for food but trodden into clay?
Or golden coins squandered and still to pay?
Or drops of blood dabbling the guilty feet?
Or such spilt water as in dreams must cheat
The undying throats of Hell, athirst alway?
I do not see them here; but after death
God knows I know the faces I shall see,
Each one a murdered self, with low last breath:
'I am thyself,—what hast thou done to me?'
'And I—and I—thyself,' (lo! each one saith,)
'And thou thyself to all eternity!'

THE SUN'S SHAME.

BEHOLDING youth and hope in mockery caught
From life; and mocking pulses that remain
When the soul's death of bodily death is fain;
Honour unknown, and honour known unsought;
And penury's sedulous self-torturing thought
On gold, whose master therewith buys his bane;
And longed-for woman longing all in vain
For lonely man with love's desire distraught;
And wealth, and strength, and power, and pleasantness,
Given unto bodies of whose souls men say,
None poor and weak, slavish and foul, as they:—
Beholding these things, I behold no less
The blushing morn and blushing eve confess
The shame that loads the intolerable day.

ON REFUSAL OF AID BETWEEN NATIONS.

NOT that the earth is changing, O my God!
Nor that the seasons totter in their walk,—
Not that the virulent ill of act and talk
Seethes ever as a winepress ever trod,—
Not therefore are we certain that the rod
Weighs in thine hand to smite thy world; though now
Beneath thine hand so many nations bow,
So many kings:—not therefore, O my God!—
But because Man is parcelled out in men
To-day; because, for any wrongful blow,
No man not stricken asks, 'I would be told
Why thou dost thus;' but his heart whispers then,
'He is he, I am I.' By this we know
That our earth falls asunder, being old.

WINTER.

HOW large that thrush looks on the bare thorn-tree!
A swarm of such, three little months ago.
Had hidden in the leaves and let none know
Save by the outburst of their minstrelsy.
A white flake here and there—a snow-lily
Of last night's frost—our naked flower-beds hold;
And for a rose-flower on the darkling mould
The hungry redbreast gleams. No bloom, no bee.
The current shudders to its ice-bound sedge:
Nipped in their bath, the stark reeds one by one
Flash each its clinging diamond in the sun:
'Neath winds which for this Winter's sovereign pledge
Shall curb great king-masts to the ocean's edge
And leave memorial forest-kings o'erthrown.

SPRING.

SOFT-LITTERED is the new year's lambing-fold,
And in the hollowed haystack at its side
The shepherd lies o' nights now, wakeful-eyed
At the ewes' travailing call through the dark cold.
The young rooks cheep 'mid the thick caw o' the old:
And near unpeopled stream-sides, on the ground,
By her spring-cry the moorhen's nest is found,
Where the drained flood-lands flaunt their marigold.
Chill are the gusts to which the pastures cower,
And chill the current where the young reeds stand
As green and close as the young wheat on land:
Yet here the cuckoo and the cuckoo-flower
Plight to the heart Spring's perfect imminent hour
Whose breath shall soothe you like your dear one's hand.

FOR A VENETIAN PASTORAL

BY GIORGIONE.

WATER, for anguish of the solstice :—nay,
But dip the vessel slowly,—nay, but lean
And hark how at its verge the wave sighs in
Reluctant. Hush! Beyond all depth away
The heat lies silent at the brink of day:
Now the hand trails upon the viol-string
That sobs, and the brown faces cease to sing,
Sad with the whole of pleasure. Whither stray
Her eyes now, from whose mouth the slim pipes creep
And leave it pouting, while the shadowed grass
Is cool against her naked side? Let be :—
Say nothing now unto her lest she weep,
Nor name this ever. Be it as it was,—
Life touching lips with Immortality.

THOMAS CHATTERTON.

WITH Shakspeare's manhood at a boy's wild heart,—
Through Hamlet's doubt to Shakspeare near allied,
And kin to Milton through his Satan's pride,—
At Death's sole door he stooped, and craved a dart;
And to the dear new bower of England's art,—
Even to that shrine Time else had deified,
The unuttered heart that soared against his side,—
Drove the fell point, and smote life's seals apart.
Thy nested home-loves, noble Chatterton;
The angel-trodden stair thy soul could trace
Up Redcliffe's spire; and in the world's armed space
Thy gallant sword-play:—these to many an one
Are sweet for ever; as thy grave unknown
And love-dream of thine unrecorded face.

UNTIMELY LOST.

(OLIVER MADOX-BROWN,

BORN 1855; DIED 1874.)

UPON the landscape of his coming life
A youth high-gifted gazed, and found it fair:
The heights of work, the floods of praise, were there.
What friendships, what desires, what love, what wife?—
All things to come. The fanned springtide was rife
With imminent solstice; and the ardent air
Had summer sweets and autumn fires to bear;—
Heart's ease full-pulsed with perfect strength for strife.
A mist has risen: we see the youth no more:
Does *he* see on and strive on? And may we
Late-tottering world-worn hence, find *his* to be
The young strong hand which helps us up that shore?
Or, echoing the No More with Nevermore,
Must Night be ours and his? We hope: and he?

IN THE SHADOWS.

I.

IF it must be; if it must be, O God!
That I die young, and make no further moans;
That underneath the unrespective sod,
In unescutcheoned privacy, my bones
Shall crumble soon,—then give me strength to bear
The last convulsive throe of too sweet breath!
I tremble from the edge of life, to dare
The dark and fatal leap, having no faith,
No glorious yearning for the Apocalypse.
But like a child that in the night-time cries
For light, I cry; forgetting the eclipse
Of knowledge and our human destinies.
O peevish and uncertain soul! obey
The law of life in patience till the Day.

IN THE SHADOWS.

II.

NOW, while the long-delaying ash assumes
The delicate April green, and, loud and clear,
Through the cool, yellow, mellow twilight glooms,
The thrush's song enchants the captive ear;
Now, while a shower is pleasant in the falling,
Stirring the still perfume that wakes around;
Now that doves mourn, and from the distance calling,
The cuckoo answers with a sovereign sound,—
Come, with thy native heart, O true and tried;
But leave all books; for what with converse high,
Flavoured with Attic wit, the time shall glide
On smoothly, as a river floweth by,
Or as on stately pinion, through the gray
Evening, the culver cuts his liquid way,

IN THE SHADOWS.

III.

OCTOBER'S gold is dim—the forests rot,
The weary rain falls ceaseless, while the day
Is wrapped in damp. In mire of village way
The hedge-row leaves are stamped: and, all forgot,
The broodless nest sits visible in the thorn.
Autumn, among her drooping marigolds,
Weeps all her garnered sheaves, and empty folds,
And dripping orchards—plundered and forlorn.
The season is a dead one, and I die!
No more, no more for me the Spring shall make
A resurrection in the earth, and take
The death from out her heart—O God, I die!
The cold throat-mist creeps nearer, till I breathe
Corruption. Drop, stark night, upon my death!

IN THE SHADOWS.

IV.

DIE down, O dismal day! and let me live;
And come, blue deeps! magnificently strown
With coloured clouds—large, light, and fugitive—
By upper winds through pompous motions blown.
Now it is death in life—a vapour dense
Creeps round my window till I cannot see
The far snow-shining mountains, and the glens
Shagging the mountain-tops. O God! make free
This barren, shackled earth, so deadly cold—
Breathe gently forth thy Spring, till Winter flies
In rude amazement, fearful and yet bold,
While she performs her 'customed charities.
I weigh the loaded hours till life is bare—
O God! for one clear day, a snowdrop, and sweet air!

HER BEAUTY.

I KNEW that in her beauty was the healing
Of sorrows, and the more than earthly cure
Of earth-begotten ills man may endure,
Gnawed on by cares, or blown by winds of feeling.
For in her beauty was the clear revealing
Of Truth ; and with the sight a man grew pure,
And all his life and thinking steadfast, sure,
As one before a shrine of Godhead kneeling.
But then, alas ! I saw that she was made
No whit less mortal, frail,—or she might miss
Death—than the summer substance of a flower ;
That on her beauty Death had even laid
A touch, and in the distance called her his,
And Time might steal her beauty every hour.

NO more these passion-worn faces shall men's eyes
Behold in life. Death leaves no trace behind
Of their wild hate and wilder love, grown blind
In desperate longing, more than the foam which lies
Splashed up awhile where the showered spray descries
The waves whereto their cold limbs were resigned;
Yet ever doth the sea-wind's undefined
Vague wailing shudder with their dying sighs.
For all men's souls 'twixt sorrow and love are cast,
As on the earth each lingers his brief space,
While surely nightfall comes, where each man's face
In death's obliteration sinks at last
As a deserted wind-tossed sea's foam-trace—
Life's chilled boughs emptied by death's autumn-blast.

NOTES

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1 *perséver* = persevere, continue; *liever* = lieffer, preferable; *property* = qualities, powers.

2 *lynn* = cease, desist; *bin* = been.

3 *soote* = sweet; *make* = mate; *flete* = float, swim; *slings* = casts off; *smale* = small—pronounced as spelt; *mings* = mixes.

6 *'sdeign* = disdain, scorn.

12 *ensue* = follow—in an intransitive sense.

15 *memorize:* conjectural emendation, the old copy having 'memorie.'

16 *the Laurel—i.e.*, Spenser.

17 *posy:* adopted for the sake of the metaphor, although the old copies read 'Poesie', and 'Poems'; *dictionary's method* = alliteration; *denizd* = naturalized; *far-fet* = far-fetched.

18 'The last line of this poem is a little obscured by transposition. He means, Do they call ungratefulness there a virtue?'—*Charles Lamb.*

25-26 *evil:* a monosyllable, ultimately contracted to *ill.*

163 The *royal Saint* is Henry VI.

164 From *Ecclesiastical Sketches*, 1822. 'I told you that I had made up my mind about Wordsworth's grandest sonnet—that on Monte Rosa. . . . Nearly always I have had to repeat it twice, because the abundance of thought in it cannot be taken in at one hearing. The

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Monte Rosa, with its pure virgin snows, lit up by the heavenly glory, is taken as the symbol of the Incarnation in the first eight lines; then in the last six it becomes the emblem of the Christian's progressive holiness and hope in death. The transition from one to the other is abrupt, and would constitute a defect in the sonnet, if we did not remember that the poet trusted his readers to supply the suppressed connection between the two parts,—this, namely, that the member depends on the Head, that man's life can be transfigured by a light from heaven only because God Himself has become man.'—*A Talk about Sonnets* (BLACKWOOD'S MAGAZINE, August 1880).

172 'In a leaf of a quarto edition of the "Lives of the Saints, written in Spanish by the learned and reverend father, Alfonso Villegas, Divine, of the Order of St. Dominick, set forth in English by John Heigham, Anno 1630", bought at a Catholic book shop in Duke-street, Lincoln's Inn Fields, I found, carefully inserted, a painted flower, seemingly coeval with the book itself; and did not, for some time, discover that it opened in the middle, and was the cover to a very humble draught of a St. Anne, with the Virgin and Child; doubtless the performance of some poor but pious Catholic, whose meditations it assisted.'—*Author's note.*

174 In a note on this sonnet in my larger work, though privileged to recover the precise text of the original version, which practically had been lost for about half a century, I was unable to state where the poem had actually first appeared; and a letter from Coleridge to White, undated, but certainly written sometime subsequently to 28th November 1827, was referred to, in which the former repudiates the charge of having, in some quarter not specified, unauthorisedly published a sonnet of the latter's—presumably the great one on *Night and Death.* Shortly after the issue of my volume I was favoured with

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a communication from my obliging correspondent, the Rev. Thomas Ashe, acquainting me that the sonnet had first seen the light in *The Bijou* for 1828; and Mr. Hall Caine has since duly noted the fact in his *Sonnets of Three Centuries* (1882). It still remains to be pointed out, however, that an examination of *The Bijou* at once establishes the identity of the sonnet therein printed with the one referred to in the correspondence above mentioned, and satisfactorily, as I think, explains how Coleridge had unwittingly incurred his friend's displeasure. Several of Coleridge's most beautiful and characteristic pieces appear in the annual named; and as in the Preface it is recorded that 'Mr. Coleridge, in the most liberal manner, permitted the Editor to select what he pleased from all his unpublished MSS.', and the sonnet itself bears the significant superscription, 'Dedicated to S. T. Coleridge, Esq., by his sincere friend, Joseph Blanco White', the presumption is that Coleridge, in handing over these papers, had, with characteristic carelessness, included the sonnet with them, which thus came to be given to the public without either his own or its author's cognizance.

189 *deckt:* here conjecturally printed for 'drest.'

201 From the *Poems*, 1817.

202 *swell and fall:* so Keats's MS.—preferably to the 'fall and swell' of the printed copy. L. 14. *Aliter:*—

'Half-passionless, and so swoon on to death.'

211 'Dated "Spring Cottage, Feb. 12, 1841". This charming and highly characteristic sonnet, now first printed, I draw forth from the obscurity of a private MS. album (containing many other most interesting autographs) which, at the time the sonnet was written into it, belonged to Charles Swain the poet. It is now the property of Dr. Coveney of Prestwich, to whose courtesy I

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am indebted for the privilege of adding this grain of Hartley Coleridge's gold dust to my *Treasury*. The sonnet, *verbatim* as given in the text, is written, dated, and signed in the undoubted autograph of Hartley Coleridge. I presume the youngest reader would resent any further information than the allusion itself supplies (l. 12) touching the "birds" that wrought the

"good and pious deed
Of which we in the Ballad read."

Curiously enough, the two ballads of *The Children in the Wood* and *Barbara Allen's Cruelty* stand in close proximity in Percy (*Reliques*, ed. Wheatley, 1877, vol. iii., Book the Second, pp. 128-169).'—*A Treasury of English Sonnets*, p. 428.

224 *closing o'er:* the printed copy reads, disastrously, 'close around,' which Mr. Hall Caine retains, and, not less disastrously, alters *round* in l. 14 to 'o'er.' It is believed that the true lection is now here for the first time restored.

231-238 All now taken from the *Collected Sonnets, Old and New*, 1880.

244 From the *Poems*, 1844, as finally amended, 1856.

256 The pseudonymous work by Ellison of which I was unable to give the title in my former work (p. 413, foot-note) is, *Stones from the Quarry; or, Moods of Mind. By Henry Browne* [1874].

266-270 From *The Legend of Jubal and other Poems*, 1874.

282 'In April [1880] he made a drawing illustrative of the *Sonnet on the Sonnet*, a highly finished design in ink, and the same that forms the frontispiece to this volume. This he painted in Indian ink, as a frontispiece to a copy of Mr. David Main's *Treasury of English Sonnets*, which he presented to his mother on her birthday, in the floral design along the lower right corner being the inscription,

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"D. G. Rossetti, pro matre fecit, Apr: 27, 1880"; a book that he valued highly himself, and which was thus made more valuable still. The *Sonnet on the Sonnet*, as it is given in this design, differs only from the printed copy in the use of the word "intricate" in place of "arduous" in the fifth line [and "prevail" for "may rule" in the seventh]; and only a portion of the sonnet is illustrated. The figure is that of the animating spirit, or soul, as signified by the word "anima" written in the upper corner; the harp is the Sonnet, with fourteen strings for the fourteen lines of that form of composition; and the spreading branches of the tree represent the all-embracing aspects of life which the Sonnet can apprehend and embody. The further end of the branches terminates in a split coin, on one side of which is revealed the soul in its emblem the butterfly, and on the other the intertwined letters Alpha and Omega. The design is highly interesting, not only because of its correct drawing and novel style, but also from the fact that it is a pictorial tribute towards what Rossetti always considered his special vehicle in verse.'—*Dante Gabriel Rossetti: a Record and a Study.* By William Sharp, 1882, p. 259.

282-288 From the series entitled 'The House of Life,' in its completed state: *Ballads and Sonnets*, 1881.

294 *echoing the No More with Nevermore:* doubtless in allusion to Shelley's despairing cry,—

> 'Out of the day and night
> A joy has taken flight:
> Fresh spring, and summer, and winter hoar
> Move my faint heart with grief, but with delight
> No more—O never more!'

289-294 From the same volume, except those on pages 289 and 292, which are from the *Poems*, 1870.

299 From the posthumous *Songs of a Worker*, 1881.

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